

MOTHER IN PLEA OVER KILLED SON

Report by Peter Madeley

"NOTHING will ever bring him back, but we need to get some sort of closure." These are the desperate words of the distraught mother of Adam Jones – the 15-year-old from Wednesbury who was killed by a hit-and-run driver.

Eight months on from the tragedy, Mandy Ruston has made an emotional plea for help to catch her son's killer. "I keep waiting for the phone to ring, for someone to tell me they have caught the person responsible. We don't want Adam to be forgotten about," said Mandy.

Adam was left to die after being hit by a Volkswagen Bora as he crossed at the junction of Beacon View Road and Walsall Road in West Bromwich on March 26.



Victim – Adam Jones

Contest win for students in business

ENTREPRENEURIAL students from Darlaston have been given £900 to invest in their business idea after competing in a Dragons Den style competition.

Grace Academy Darlaston pupils Brooklyn Davies and Kieran Kang took their idea for a personalised children's storybook, featuring photos of the child as well as their name to judges from Santander.

The judges had to choose between the ideas of pupils from Darlaston, Solihull and Coventry, before deciding who to hand over the cash to.

The Dragons chose the concept from the range of other interesting ideas because it was well thought through and close to completion. Winning pupil Kieran Kang said: "I gained from the experience of evaluating our work and improving it, and adding more information and being more accurate with the money."

Jeremy Douglas Jones, business facilitator at the school, said: "We love working with Santander on this project. The Dragons Den is excellent at pushing our students beyond their perceived boundaries and giving them a real experience of creating your own business from nothing."

Cannabis farm fires action urged

MORE needs to be done to prevent cannabis farm fires in the Black Country and bring those behind them to justice, according to a councillor.

Walsall councillor Doug James has claimed 'a vigorous campaign is urgently required' to combat people who grow the drug across the region.

He has said that fires started in cannabis factories are 'placing so many lives at risk' and claimed they are a drain on firefighting resources.

Councillor James said: "An increase in cannabis fires is a huge and lethal threat to our local communities. A vigorous campaign is urgently required across our region to combat this criminality."

"Agencies must be shaken from any lethargy on this, it is a priority."

"Cannabis fires are especially hard to tackle because they typically involve a tangle of lamps and heaters powered by illegally sourced electricity. They are often in top floors or lofts which means when a fire starts it quickly spreads at height, destroying roofs and, damages neighbouring properties."

"We cannot afford to be soft on drugs or, the profits from drugs."

The collision flung him through the front windscreen of the car, leaving him with catastrophic injuries. He was pronounced dead at the scene. The driver of the car fled on foot. His mother, Mandy, aged 44, explained the devastating effect the loss of her son has had on her family.

She said: "I am appealing to anyone who may remember the events that occurred on that night in relation to the incident, or if you know or suspect who the driver was, to please contact the police."

Since Adam's tragic death Mandy has appeared on Crimewatch in a bid to urge people to come forward with information.

Struggling

Adam had been out on his bike on the night of his death. He was killed less than five minutes away from his family home in Addison Road, Fryer Park, Wednesbury.

Mandy said her family had been left 'unable to pick up the pieces' since Adam was killed. Adam's father, Mark Jones, has not returned to work due to him suffering severe post traumatic stress disorder as a result of the incident. His two older sisters, Amy, 23 and Laura, 21, are both still struggling to come to terms with the loss.

Mandy has also taken time off from her job as a porter at Walsall Manor Hospital. "Our lives totally changed in a split second," she said. On Saturday a memorial event was held in Adam's honour at the Oakdale Social Club in West Bromwich.

It was organised by Arthur and Sharon Poll, whose 17-year-old son Scott was killed in a hit-and-run incident just yards away from their home in February 2006.

Adam was struck by a dark blue Volkswagen Bora, registration number MA52 XVV.

Anyone with information is asked to call police on 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

Glyn's making a monkey of himself



Charity fundraiser Glyn Marston from Willenhall, who is to run the London Marathon next year dressed as a gorilla carrying a cage

Big run for charity

AS if running 26 miles was not hard enough – fundraiser Glyn Marston will be doing it dressed as a gorilla.

The 52-year-old, from New Invention, will take part in his 15th London Marathon next April, his first for a decade, in a unique costume which makes him look like a gorilla carrying a cage.

To get himself ready for the run, Glyn has been donning his costume on early morning runs around Willenhall park and nearby streets.

He said: "Doing the marathon is a challenge on its own, I have done 14 in the past but this is my first for 10 years. My way of getting around that was to look into buying a fancy dress costume, so at least I have an excuse if I don't make good time. I

have turned a few heads doing my early morning runs. I don't think it would be safe for me to go out when there is heavy traffic on the roads, I could cause a crash."

Glyn will be running the marathon to raise money for Epilepsy Action, a charity close to his heart.

He will also be competing in the London 100 bike ride for the same cause. He said: "I have suffered with epilepsy throughout my life, even though my last attack was back in 1977, I am still taking medicine every day to keep myself from having another."

To make a donation ahead of Glyn's run, visit www.justgiving.com/glyn-marston/ or text GLYN62 followed by £1, £2 or £3 to 70070.

CRIME

Police warning on thefts of bags

SHOPPERS have been warned to stay on guard after a spate of handbag thefts in Walsall town centre in the last month.

Property ranging from cash, mobile phones and credit and debit cards has been taken by people dipping in to handbags on around 10 occasions, prompting a police sergeant to issue a warning.

Sgt Julie Whiting said: "Shoppers and visitors to the town centre are reminded to take extra care when leaving banks or cash machines. Place purses into handbags and securely zip up before moving away from the bank or ATM."

PROTEST

Patriots chief in 'peaceful' pledge

A FAR-RIGHT protest march through Walsall will be '100 per cent peaceful' according to organisers.

The United Patriots group want to take to the town centre on February 27 in a protest against militant Islam and immigration. So far more than 100 people have signed up to the event on Facebook. Group leader Liam Walsall said: "I will be running the event for United Patriots. I want to say we will remain 100 per cent peaceful."

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TRANSPORT

First phase of rail bridge work done

THE first phase of work to rebuild a railway bridge which runs underneath Park Street and bring electric trains to Walsall has been completed.

The rebuilding project in the town centre started on October 4. Shoppers can now make their way through the street freely as work has been suspended until the Christmas period is over. It is expected that the project will be completed by Easter 2016.

Councillor Adrian Andrew, Walsall Council's deputy leader, said: "I am pleased that Network Rail have stuck to their word and ceased work on Park Street over Christmas."

INSIDE

JACK'S MEDAL WAIT IS OVER



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300 Caparo jobs saved in buy-out

THREE hundred Black Country jobs have been saved at struggling steel giant Caparo.

Caparo Tubular Solutions, which has bases in Oldbury and Bilston, has been bought by the Gupta family who run the Simec and Liberty House groups. The deal means 333 jobs have been saved, 300 of which are in the Black Country.

It comes after Chancellor George Osborne visited the Jaguar Land Rover plant on the outskirts of Wolverhampton after announcing that 200 skilled engineering and manufacturing jobs are set to be created in the region in the new £16.6 million research consortium led by JLR.

The deal to save CTS has been welcomed by union bosses, councillors and MPs across the

Black Country. Sandwell Council leader Darren Cooper said: "This is great news for the workers, particularly against the backdrop of recent bad news associated with the firm. We welcome the new owners and will be making efforts to see if we can help in any way."

Harish Patel, national officer for the union Unite, said: "Unite will be working with the new owners to ensure jobs are secured in the UK for the long term. We will also be seeking assurances and commitments from the new owners on investment and training which is so crucial to sustaining skilled, well-paid jobs in our manufacturing sector." CTS includes Caparo Precision Tubes in Oldbury, Caparo Tube Components and Caparo

Accles and Pollock, also based in Oldbury, Hub Le Bas in Bilston, and Caparo Tubes Tredegar in Wales. It has not been confirmed how many jobs have been saved at each site, as a number of staff are said to work from multiple bases.

Announcing the sale, Matthew Hammond, Midlands region chairman for PwC and lead administrator, said: "We are delighted to have made further substantial progress with this deal. We had targeted selling a number of the Caparo businesses during November." The deal brings the number of Caparo jobs saved since the firm went into administration to 488. The firm went into administration in October, initially putting up to 1,700 jobs in the Black Country at risk.

Far-right group will stage march in town

A FAR-RIGHT group is planning a march through Walsall in protest against Islam and immigration.

The United Patriots group wants to take to the town centre on February 27.

So far more than 100 people have signed up to the event on Facebook. It comes just three months after the English Defence League held a march through the town. Nine people were arrested at that event.

This latest protest has been condemned by Walsall Council leader Councillor Mike Bird, who described the situation as 'very sad'.

Liam Walsall, leader of the Walsall Patriots group, which has links to the United Patriots, wrote on Facebook: "There are major issues in Walsall, we have been contacted all year round to hold a protest in Walsall and we've finally got round to holding it."

"We need this protest to prove Walsall is still an English town."

Challenge

"Islam has a strong hold within Walsall and we need to challenge the whole Islamic community to see what they are doing to tackle the rise of extreme Islam."

When sharing the event on Facebook, Liam added: "No surrender."

Councillor Bird said: "I have never heard of them. It's very sad because we have a diverse community in Walsall. We have some experience of good community cohesion and this does nothing but drive a wedge between communities and we could do without them. We have to accept that living in a democratic country with free speech that they will be coming to the town, there will be some disruption, and hopefully they will go away after that."

Billy Corrigan, spokesman for West Midlands Police, said: "We are aware of the Facebook post but nothing more at this stage." The United Patriots, whose Facebook page has more than 6,300 members, cancelled a planned protest against 'the growing Islamisation in Walsall town' last month amid claims its support was dwindling. Previously, the group organised a memorial service for murdered soldier Lee Rigby at Bloxwich War Memorial in May.

The protest will come just months after the EDL marched in Walsall.

Lantern walk lights up hospice smiles

IT may have been wet, and it was certainly cold, but that did not stop hundreds of men, women and children turning out for a special fundraiser.

The annual lantern walk at Walsall Arboretum in aid of Acorns Children's Hospice provided plenty of colour as more than 300 walkers carried orange paper lamps which were lit as dusk fell. This year pride of place was given to an extra-large lantern that had been decorated by children at the hospice during an arts and crafts session.

The group of hardy walkers set off around the lake, following either a short or longer route, some wearing fancy dress, many donning Christmas hats and tinsel, and all wrapped up well against the November chill. Organisers hailed the day a great success and thanked everyone who turned out for taking part.

Abi Floyd, fundraising manager at Acorns, said the sight of so many lighted lanterns helped to create a 'fantastic' atmosphere at the finish line.

She said: "It was great to see so many people braving the weather on the day, whether walking or volunteering, who all helped make the event a wonderful success."

It is hoped the event, sponsored by First Personnel, will raise around £25,000, helping considerably towards Acorns' yearly £9 million running costs across its three hospices.

As part of the event walkers chose between a 5km stroll within the grounds of the arboretum or a 12km walk via the hospice in Walstead Road, Walsall. Entertainment at the arboretum included live music, face painting, arts and crafts.



From left, Mel Smith, Liane Crouch, Pam Crouch and Aimee Crouch



Acorns Children's Hospice CEO David Strudley gets ready to start

Family vows to fight for justice after gran's death

THE family of a grandmother who died after doctors misdiagnosed her with terminal bowel cancer have vowed to 'fight for the justice she deserves'.

Audrey Humpage died aged 70 a month after doctors at Walsall Manor Hospital said there was nothing more they could do. However, a postmortem later found the Mrs Humpage, of Warewell Road, did not have the cancer. She had a pelvic abscess.

Treatment could have been given for the pelvic condition, which was a contributory factor toward her death.

Mrs Humpage's three children Chris, 42, Martin, 44 and Angela, 47 attended a Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust board meeting yesterday to discuss the case.

During the meeting, which hospital bosses used to inform the family of changes made in the wake of Mrs Humpage's death, her son Chris said: "We all know that we are never going to get out mother back but we intend to continue fighting so those who believe are to blame for her death are held properly accountable."

"I want to be able to go to her grave and tell her that I am fighting for the justice she deserves."

Richard Kirby, Manor chief executive, said: "The intention of this discussion is to make sure we understand what went wrong with the care of Mrs Humpage. On behalf of this board I want to say sorry for what happened. I can't imagine the distress this has caused and I hope we can learn from this."

● Wrongly - Page 5

Saddlers at fourth for league arrests

WALSALL picked up the fourth-highest number of arrests in League One, Home Office figures reveal.

A total of 24 of the club's supporters were arrested last season.

Meanwhile more than 30 West Bromwich Albion supporters were arrested. In total 35 Baggies supporters were held by police - three and home and 32 away - while four picked up bans.

Out of the Saddlers fans, five arrests were at home, 15 away, and four at a neutral venue. Six received bans.

Elsewhere in the Black Country, Wolves fans were among the worst behaved in the country with more than 72 arrested.

Wolves supporters also received the most banning orders in the Football League.

1,100 new school places are on way

MORE than 1,100 new school places will be created across Sandwell after an £8.5 million project was backed. Councillors agreed to the plan for 715 extra primary places and 390 secondary places at a council cabinet meeting. Twelve schools will benefit from the scheme.

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20 battle off-licence blaze with two treated

A SEVERE fire broke out at an off-licence in Walsall, with two people being taken to hospital.

The blaze happened on the ground floor of the shop in Caldmore Green on Saturday at 2.50pm.

In total, 20 firefighters battled the fire before investigators carried out an examination of the scene to find out how it had started in the first place.

A man, aged in his 40s, suffered burns and was taken to hospital. Another man was also taken to hospital.

Police closed off the road between Corporation Street and Brace Street while the blaze was being tackled by the emergency service.

A West Midlands Fire Service spokesman said: "The building was a two-storey mid-terraced dwelling with a ground floor shop which caught ablaze. Four fire engines and 20 firefighters brought the fire under control using two hose reel jets."

A West Midlands Ambulance Service spokesman said: "When crews arrived they found a fire which had seriously damaged a retail property in Walsall. A man believed to be in his 40s suffered superficial burns to his face and hands."

"A second man presented himself to ambulance staff having been overcome by smoke. Both patients were treated at the scene by ambulance staff before they were taken to Walsall Manor Hospital for further assessment and treatment."

"A search of the property was undertaken. However, no further patients were reported."

Garden Centre Christmas fun

CHILDREN will be helping other youngsters when they attend a Santa's Grotto at Pacific Nurseries Garden Centre, Streetly organised by local charity, Heart Research UK.

All funds and donations raised will be going towards a new project being funded by the charity at Birmingham Children's Hospital to develop special exercise programmes for children who have undergone life-saving heart surgery. Tickets are £9.50 each and Santa will be visiting the garden centre on December 6,12,13,18,19,20,21, and 22.

As well as meeting Santa the children will enjoy a Christmas trail, face-painting, meet the elves, letters to Santa and Christmas colouring competition.

Eight jobs as gym to become garage

A FORMER gym in Wolverhampton will be converted into a garage after planners approved the scheme.

Eight jobs will be created at the workshop on the site of the former truGym off Birmingham Road.

Families moving at major new estate



Hannah Divine and Kobi Divine, aged one

THE second phase of a £88 million regeneration drive to bring new homes to Walsall has been completed.

Families are currently moving in to 27 new homes built on the Waters Keep estate as part of the multi million pound scheme to regenerate the Goscote Lane Corridor.

The latest key handover follows the completion of phase one of the regeneration scheme in March this year when 29 families moved into their new homes in Goscote.

By March 2018 Waters Keep will offer a total of 177 homes for afford-

able rent from Walsall Housing Group and a further 235 for open market sale by developer Keepmoat.

Hannah Devine, who has just moved into a three bedroom home on the estate with husband Karl and three children Meghan, aged seven, Isabella, five, and one-year-old Kobi, said: "We are thrilled with our new home and so excited to have moved to this up and coming area just in time for Christmas. We were already whg customers but were living in Rushall when we decided to bid for one of the new homes on Waters Keep."

"There has been a lot of investment, it is a desirable place to live, and the houses looked great. We were lucky enough to be successful and we are now looking forward to bringing up our family here."

The regeneration of the Goscote Lane Corridor is the largest residential development scheme in the borough.

By the time work is completed, whg will have invested more than £42 million building new homes in the area, including £19 million on the Waters Keep Estate alone.

Jack's 71-year wait for D-Day medal over

HE is the lifelong Saddlers fan who got to see his dream come true this year by witnessing his beloved Walsall FC reach Wembley for the first time.

But now 90-year-old Jack Huskisson has been given another reason to celebrate after his part in the D-Day landings has finally been recognised.

The long-standing Palfrey resident was presented with the French Legion of Honour medal last Tuesday - ending a 71-year wait. "I was a bit emotional, I was beginning to think I wasn't going to get it," he said. "But it is nice that the French appreciated what we did."

Mr Huskisson said that he volunteered for the army as a 17-year-old in 1943 hoping it would increase his chances of getting into the Royal Army Service Corps which appealed to him because of his interest in transport. His wishes were fulfilled and after signing up in Carlisle and going through six weeks of training he was posted to Blaenau Point in Chester before he was later moved on down to Fulbourne near Cambridge.

But three months later he was reposted to New Forest in Hampshire to prepare for D-Day - although at that time he did not know it.

Dangerous

"There were thousands of us there - Polish, Americans, Canadians, French, we were not told at first it was for D-Day but we had some idea," he said. "We knew it was going to be very dangerous."

Mr Huskisson was put into the Number 10 beach landing group and on June 6, 1944 - which was famously a day later than planned due to weather. He and thousands of others sailed to Normandy for one of the most historic battles which defined the Second World War. He said: "There were so many ships, you felt like you could step from one to another."

"When we got to France, the battleships were flying overhead. The noise was terrific."

But aside from the obvious perils coming directly from the tip of German guns Mr Huskisson had

Report by Carl Jackson

another problem - he couldn't swim. It was worrying me that I couldn't swim. I was only 5ft two. I was up to my waist in water and I just hoped for the best but I managed it.

"We got to Sword beach and we were lucky, we managed to dig ourselves in. It was very frightening, you didn't know what to expect next. You could see the bodies floating in the water."

"But we were lucky compared to some who really copped it."

He said it took a while for Allied troops to break through the defences at Caen but once it fell soldiers were able to advance further into France, Belgium and ultimately Germany.

It was then he reverted to his main duties of transporting diesel and petrol to refuel war vehicles.

In the weeks leading up to the end of the war a twist of fate befell Mr Huskisson as he was sent home to be with his father Edward who passed away aged 52 from emphysema. He spent another two years in the army being released in 1947 aged 21.

In between he married wife Irene and has since had a son along with three grandchildren. Next year is their 70th wedding anniversary.

Mr Huskisson worked in Walsall's leather trade serving for 17 years at E T Holden's based where the town's Saddlers Shopping Centre now stands.

After that he worked for MEB until he retired.



Pride - Jack Huskisson, aged 91, with his French Legion of Honour medal



Jack with the Star in around 1948



Jack, in uniform, aged 18 in 1943

NEWS IN BRIEF

Winnick questions air strikes policy

WALSALL MP David Winnick says increasing air strikes on Syria would do 'very little' to repel the threat of Islamic State militants.

He questioned the Prime Minister over whether military action in Syria would help to defeat IS: "While I don't question the sincerity of the Prime Minister I don't think military action will do anything to defeat or even seriously undermine IS."

"I wonder how many members of the House really believe that it would make any real difference at all in defeating this hated death cult."

Assa Abloy win business award

BOSSSES at lockmakers Assa Abloy say they are honoured after The Willenhall firm triumphed at the Black Country Chamber of Commerce Awards.

The business landed the Innovation Award for Yale's keyfree and keyless smart living products at a ceremony at Wolverhampton Racecourse.

Lee Philp, chief operating officer at the firm, said: "The West Midlands has a rich heritage of lock making, so it was an honour to be recognised locally by the Black Country Chamber of Commerce."

Trampoline centre to create 100 jobs

PLANS for an indoor trampoline centre in Walsall, which would create more than 100 jobs, are poised to be given the go-ahead.

Councillors have been recommended to approve an application by Jump Nation Limited to transform an industrial unit in Bentley Mill Way, close to junction 10 of the M6.

The business will be open seven days a week and is expected to employ 114 workers. Councillors will decide on the scheme today.

CAB concerns see thousands join fight

MORE than 2,100 people have signed a petition calling for the future of Walsall's Citizens Advice Bureau to be protected. The service is under threat as part of council plans to axe its funding to save more than £480,000.

An online petition has been launched in support of the town's CAB and has attracted in excess of 600 names while more than 1,500 people have signed a paper petition. The council is planning to set up a charitable trust offering support and advice.

Rotary sleigh launch

TETTENHALL Rotary Club will launch its Christmas sleigh next weekend. The sleigh has been kitted out with reindeer, lights and music and tour venues across the city, starting on December 11 at Sainsbury's, Perton. The run will end on December 23 at Asda, Wolverhampton.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



THE least convincing yuletide scene came this week in the opening episode of the Beeb's new drama series, Capital. It was allegedly Christmas Eve in London yet the sun was high in the sky and the trees were in the full leaf that goes with a green and balmy season. This "Christmas" was obviously filmed in summer. Do such errors matter? Yes, they do. These days, no-one writes drama purely to entertain. There is always a message and an agenda. In Capital we are introduced to the wickedness of the banking industry, the greed of property developers, the gulf between rich and poor, the unkindness of the immigration system and the anger of young Muslims. We assume that what we see has been well researched. But if they can't even get the seasons right, why should we believe any of the rest?

RESEARCH in Russia suggests people who play classical musical instruments such as the cello and harp, live longer than those twanging away on electric guitars. As the journal Advances in Gerontology puts it, instruments associated with "higher intellect and education" go with a longer lifespan. I fear we ukulele players are not long for this world. Higher intellect and education are not usually associated with My Little Stick of Blackpool Rock. Worryingly, George Formby only made it to 56.

BENEDICT Cumberbatch plays a fashion model of indeterminate sex in Zoolander 2. For this he has been denounced in an on-line petition thus: "Cumberbatch's character is clearly portrayed as an over-the-top, cartoonish mockery of androgynous/trans-non-binary individuals." Blimey. Who'd be a pantomime dame?



IT'S good to see Timothy West and Prunella Scales back in a third series of Great Canal Journeys (C4) but the title is hardly inspiring. How about "Tim and Pru Go Bashing Into Things"? West has apparently been a canal fan for 30 years yet seems fated to hit anything in his path, be it lock, bollard or someone else's boat. There's a sudden wallop and West exclaims brightly: "Sorry, bit of wind there." Finding yourself confronted by a pair of national treasures, what can you do but smile sweetly and hope your insurance is in order? The most terrifying thing you can hear on the Grand Union is the skipper on the approaching narrowboat saying: "Fancy taking the helm, Tim?"

THE British Army's new rapid-response brigades won't be ready for ten years. The Royal Regiment of Oxymerons?

ONE of the major bakers has just announced it is making bigger crumpets. I bet that is "in response to public demand." In lardarse Britain, would anyone ask for smaller crumpets?

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Fire response times on the increase

RESPONSE times to fires across the West Midlands and Staffordshire have gone up over the past 12 months, new figures reveal.

Both fire services took longer to reach a variety of different call-outs, from vehicle to house fires during 2014/15, the data from the Department for Communities and Local Government shows.

It mirrors the national picture

where response times are at their longest for 20 years and comes at a time when the brigades are being forced to make millions of pounds of cutbacks due to a reduction in Government funding.

The statistics show that West Midlands Fire Service took an average of 7.1 minutes to respond to a house fire, up from 6.7 in 2013/14 despite fewer incidents to attend.

While the call-out time for other building fires was 7.3 minutes compared with 6.8 in the previous 12 months.

For vehicle blazes, the average time was 7.9 minutes, up from 7.4 and for outdoor fires it was 8.3 minutes up from 7.2.

West Midlands Fire Service spokesman said: "The DCLG figures only focus on dwelling fires, whereas

we measure our performance against our response to incidents where life and property are most at risk.

"We call these Category 1 incidents which also include road traffic collisions. Over the last quarter, our performance against this criteria has been 4 minutes and 42 seconds against our target of 5 minutes. The trend has been improving over the last three quarters."

Four-hour A&E waits top 1,000 at Manor

Report by Carl Jackson

WALSALL Manor Hospital now has one of the worst performing A&E departments in the country after more than 1,000 patients in a month had to wait more than four hours.

The cash-strapped trust is set to be fined almost £123,000 as a result in a year where it has already forecast it will spend £17.7million more than its budget.

The national target is for the hospital to see, treat, admit or discharge 95 per cent of patients within four hours.

But in October, out of 6,649 attendances around 1,090 patients were left waiting longer, with only 83.7 per cent dealt with on time.

Consequently Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust has been ranked 122nd out of 137 trusts in the country for emergency treatment and the worst in the West Midlands.

Performance has declined dramatically since August when the trust managed 94 per cent for the month and was ranked 84th in the country and 8th in region.

Unavailable

October's performance was down on September's unsatisfactory figure of 86.65 per cent. The reason given was the number of unavailable beds, mainly in the medical care unit. The emergency department also saw a huge increase in patients, with more than 90 ambulances arriving at the department over the month compared to 10 in September.

Overall, however, the average attendance fell slightly in October to 214 patients a day compared to 218 the previous month.

Admissions during October were 63 a day, up from 59 daily in September. Discharges fell slightly with a daily average of 195 in October compared to 199 in September.

The trust chief executive, Richard Kirby said: "We continue to see a significant increase in patients experiencing long waits in A&E in October and November, reversing the improvement we made over the spring and summer. Our response to this has been reviewed in detail at both performance, finance and investment and quality and safety committees.

"We continue to make steady progress in reducing our longest waiting times for elective treatment and in delivering our cancer and diagnostic waiting times targets."

It's cold enough for polar bears!



Bjorn, the animatronic Polar Bear, with his herder Ursula, who will both be at Old Square in Walsall

SHOPPERS are in for a festive treat when a life-like polar bear visits Walsall's Old Square shopping centre this Sunday.

The animatronic polar bear will be the star attraction at the Old Square's Christmas event.

Bjorn the Bear and his herder Ursula will be performing three nature documentary-style shows at 11am, 12.30pm and 2pm.

Children will be able to learn all about polar bears and their unique Arctic habitat, followed by a ques-

tion and answer session and for brave children the chance to feed and stroke the bear.

Visitors can also enjoy a free craft workshop from 11am to 3pm for children to make Christmas decorations.

Old Square centre manager Linda Brawn Manager said: "We are really looking forward to Bjorn visiting Old Square."

"It is a truly stunning polar bear and I'm sure our shoppers will be absolutely mesmerised by the shows."

Spaghetti Junction works set to return

ROADWORKS around Spaghetti Junction are set to return in the New Year. The £5 million scheme, which involves water-proofing the famous junction on the M6 in Birmingham, was halted in September as the first phase came to a close.

It was also paused to help ease delays during the grand reopening of New Street Station, the ribbon-cutting of Grand Central and the Rugby World Cup games at Villa Park.

Frank Bird, emergency planning manager for the West Midlands for Highways England, said: "We've been able to suspend work at Gravelly Hill because we'd reached the end of the first phase of the project." But officials confirmed the roadworks at junction six and the A38(M) will restart in January 2016.

The M6 has long been plagued by roadworks as it upgrades to become a managed motorway with variable speed limits and drivers able to go in the hard shoulder during peak times. There are also repairs ongoing at the M6 and M5 link, which have caused misery for motorists though Wednesbury, Walsall and Wolverhampton. That scheme, which resulted in the closure of the Junction 9 southbound slip road on the M6, is set to come to an end.

Wednesbury South councillor Bob Lloyd said the Spaghetti Junction work would ignite problems again. "It is just constant at the moment," he said. "Just as one seems to be done another gets going. I guess it is due to the age of the motorways now."

Pupils on trail of sporting glory

STUDENTS from a community academy in Oldbury are aiming for further sporting glory following their recent outstanding success in their fields.

Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy's Jack Grew, in Year 7, battled his way to a place at the GKR Karate UK Championships, whilst Dominic Soulsby of Year 9 has been making a splash in the pool with his swimming team, The Warley Wasps.

Jack, aged 12, recently took part in the GKR Karate Central Zone Tournament in Birmingham, which was only his second ever tournament.

Dominic, who swims regularly with the Warley Wasps Swimming Club, competed recently in the Gloucester Open Meet which took place over two days in October, achieving three personal bests.

Roadworks come in for resurfacing

TEN nights of roadworks on a busy Willenhall route have been announced. A southbound stretch of The Keyway will be closed for resurfacing between the junctions of B4484 Bilston Road and A462 Armstrong Way from 8pm until 6am, December 8 to 18.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Winnick's visit hope on pupils

A WALSALL MP says he hopes to have encouraged the next wave of politicians after taking part in a Q&A session at a primary school.

David Winnick, MP for Walsall North, visited the Beacon Primary School in Davis Road recently.

He answered questions from a large group of 10-year-olds gave a short talk on life at Westminster.

Mr Winnick said: "There was tough questioning about my role as a member of parliament. It was a useful exchange, which I enjoyed, as apparently did the pupils."

Taxi rank plans are thrown out

PLANS to turn a Willenhall car park into a taxi rank have been thrown out.

Mr Chaudhri Ghilfraz, of A2Z taxis, submitted the application to Walsall Council to turn the car park on Union Street into a 24-hour taxi rank and hand car wash facility.

The plans were turned down on the grounds that the scheme would have compromised traffic safety.

Planners said the taxi rank would have exacerbated the free flow of traffic within the one-way system and created congestion around Upper Lichfield Street and Union Street.

£115m shopping village approved

A £115 MILLION designer shopping village will be built in Staffordshire – but the development could have a negative impact on Walsall, it has been claimed.

Plans for the Mill Green Designer Outlet Village off Eastern Way have been approved by Cannock Chase councillors, and it is expected to open by 2018. However, the potential of the village to draw away business from nearby town centres, including Walsall, was questioned.

Parliamentary review honour for academy

A WALSALL school has been given the honour of representing secondary education in the 2015/16 Parliamentary Review.

Ormiston Sheffield Community Academy is one of only 10 schools nationally to be invited to appear alongside cabinet ministers in the report.

The school in Broad Way, Pelsall, was rated 'good' in an Ofsted inspection in May, with inspectors noting 'visionary, strong and effective leadership'. It was once in special measures.

Centre is opened

A NEW centre for people suffering with drug and alcohol problems in Walsall has been officially opened.

The Beacon, which will provide a range of services for people across the borough, is located on Bradford Street and offers a wide range of tailored support for adults and young people.

Forums face axe as part of cuts to save £200k

A SERIES of council meetings where the public can openly discuss issues with community leaders will be axed in a bid to save £200,000.

Walsall Council's six area management and area panel meetings also provide groups with a chance to apply for funding. But under plans to slash the council's budget by £1.1million, the meetings will be axed to save £200,000 over the next two years.

The six areas are north Walsall, south Walsall, Aldridge, Brownhills, Willenhall and Darlaston. Each has its own management officer, whose jobs are now at risk under the proposal. Low attendances at meetings, which are held regularly, has been cited as one reason for their potential scrapping.

A report attached to the proposal reads: "The main impact on customers will be reduced opportunity to listen and contribute to local debates on local issues and a potential reduction in local activities and events."

"However, public attendance at area panels is typically low and there are other ways in which the council and its partners can effectively engage communities on specific issues."

The council plans to invest £100,000 in a new voluntary service that would do a similar job to the current meetings, next year. Community boss, Councillor Anthony Harris said despite the proposal he was still committed to maintaining the panels in some form. "We will see whether there are any alternatives to ceasing doing them," he said.

Trailer-full of fakes seized

FAKE sports clothing, trainers and speakers were just some of the counterfeit goods seized at Bescot market.

Walsall Trading Standards Officers visited the market on November 15 and confiscated a large haul of fake goods. Officers collected items from four stalls as part of a programme to eradicate counterfeit goods from being sold, netting the equivalent of a 20-foot container-full.

As part of the programme officers worked with market operators Bescot Promotions and Walsall Football Club and follows advice given to stall holders. Economy chief, Councillor Adrian Andrew said: "Those people who sell fake goods like these are committing a criminal act and are jeopardising jobs."

New routes for bus lanes CCTV

NEW bus lane cameras have come into force in Wolverhampton. They are at Pipers Row between Berry Street and Railway Drive, Market Street between Bilston Street and Tower Street and Stafford Street.

Half-year profits slump at Chamberlin



A worker pours hot metal into moulds

THE impact of the weak euro and tougher trading conditions have hit half-year profits at Walsall engineering group Chamberlin, slashing them by three quarters.

As a result, its profits for the year as a whole will also be down. But the company says new contracts won by its Walsall foundry, to make complex castings for diesel car engines, will help get profits back on track next year.

As well as its Chamberlin & Hill site in Chucky Road the company also has foundries in Leicester and Scunthorpe and engineering sites at Cannock and in Birmingham, employing around 400 people altogether.

Over the six months to the end of September revenues at the group fell £3 million to £18m, due to the weakness of the euro compared to sterling and lower demand from the steel, oil and gas and mining sectors.

Underlying pre-tax profit slumped to £100,000 from £400,000 a year ago, as the company took a £600,000 hit from the weak euro.

But the company has gone ahead with a £700,000 investment to support the automotive contract win at

Walsall, which is due to start production next year.

Chamberlin chairman Keith Butler-Wheelhouse said: "Results have been impacted by both the weak euro and a slowdown in some of our core markets and therefore, despite the continued drive for efficiency, half year profits are behind the same period last year. However, we anticipate the profit outlook for the next financial year to March 31, 2017, to recover, with the major contract wins at Walsall expected to enter into production in 2016."

Tragic gran wrongly diagnosed with cancer

Hair-raising fun for students



Modelling some extravagant hairstyles created by hairdressing students at Walsall College, including, front from left, Shani Fieldhouse, of Darlaston, Abigail Griffiths, aged 12, of Darlaston, and Leanne Bourne, aged 17, of Walsall

HAIRDRESSING students have been showcasing their creative flair and stylish talents at a college show.

Walsall College hosted an avant-garde hair show at its graduate academy salon.

As part of a creative design unit on their course, level three students were set the challenge to come up with experimental and innovative hairdos using different styling techniques. The show featured a mix of styles from crimping to braiding with themed make-up, costumes and accessories to complete the over all looks.

Students' designs took inspiration from nature, iconic landmarks, current fashion trends, history and films.

Student, Kyla Green, aged 28, said: "This has been my favourite unit on the course so far as it really gave me the chance to have fun exploring many different creative styles. I'd recommend this course to anyone considering a career in hairdressing."

"It's really a great place to learn, the facilities are brilliant and the tutors are really helpful and have a lot of experience as well."

A GRANDMOTHER was denied treatment for a pelvic condition by doctors who wrongly diagnosed her with terminal bowel cancer a month before she died, a damning investigation has uncovered.

Doctors at Walsall Manor Hospital told the family of 70-year-old Audrey Humpage there was nothing more they could do to save her after diagnosing her with inoperable cancer. But a postmortem revealed the mother of three, from Warewell Road, Walsall, had a pelvic abscess, which could have been treated.

A coroner found the abscess was a contributory factor toward her death, although the main cause was sepsis. The Health Service Ombudsman has reviewed the case and found that Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust was guilty of numerous failings.

Investigator Tim O'Mahoney could not conclude that Mrs Humpage's death could have been prevented, even if the abscess had been diagnosed, because her health was 'extremely poor' at the time.

Incorrect

He said: "We conclude that the trust made an incorrect diagnosis of bowel cancer and that further tests should have been carried out to confirm the nature of the abdominal mass."

"We agree with the trust view that further treatment for inoperable cancer for a patient in Mrs Humpage's condition at the time would have been inappropriate as it is clear that she was too frail to undergo the tests and treatment for cancer. However, we are persuaded by our advice that Mrs Humpage was not too frail to undergo the tests and treatment for pelvic abscess."

Her three children Chris, aged 42, Martin, 44, and Angela, 47, attended a trust board meeting last week. Despite the ombudsman's findings they are convinced something more could have been done to save her.

A statement issued on their behalf said: "We do not recog-



Left, grandmother Audrey Humpage, right, Amir Khan

nise all of the ombudsman's findings as it's clear to us that our mum's death was avoidable.

"We are confident we will eventually be proved correct. The hospital will have noted that our mum was a strong fighter. She was not ready to die. On the 16th December 2013 we were told that her death was imminent. She lived for a further 23 days after this."

Mrs Humpage had a history of cerebrovascular disease, epilepsy, hypertension and diverticular disease and was first admitted to the Manor on September 23, 2013 after collapsing.

She died on January 9 last year. The trust has apologised to the family and vowed to put measures in place to prevent the same happening to another patient.

Amir Khan, trust medical director, said: "We would once again like to offer our condolences to the Humpage family for their loss and have apologised to them regarding the poor standard of care that their loved one received."

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Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

Managing Director Brian Stanley feels that it's all about service. "Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people

money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done.

We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole."

Cloudy2Clear service Wolverhampton and the surrounding

area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. "The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people



I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated."

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews



Council's vision for theatre is revealed

EXCITING news for those of you who have been following the long-running story surrounding the Dudley Hippodrome. The council has now revealed its exciting new plans for the empty theatre.

Bright, sweeping, 'multi-functional' and gateway are among the surfeit of adjectives lavishly used to describe the new vision.

And what is the new plan in question? Well you will be surprised to learn it involves another block-paving scheme.

What is it with councils and block-paving? Dudley has done pretty well with these fabled slabs in recent years. There has been the scheme in the market place, the 'civic square' in Stone Street, and the 'open-air theatre' in Coronation Gardens.

Then there's the scheme in Wolverhampton, where the council boasted it would increase 'footfall' – local authority speak for visitors – when all it seems to have done so far is caused traffic problems around the bus station and closed one of the city's oldest and nicest shops.

Look, I've got nothing against a bit of block-paving. Usually, it looks quite nice. But as a regeneration tool it is next to useless. Nobody ever comes into town to admire the floor surface.

And back to the Hippodrome. Now, I'm a realist, I know there's no magic money tree, and I don't expect the council to pour in millions of pounds. And if, in the six years since the council bought the theatre for £500,000 it had come up with an exciting scheme for the site, be it a new theatre, a museum or tourist attraction, then I would be all for it.

But having spent half a million on buying the theatre, the best ideas it has come up with have been a temporary car park, a conference centre and now an Alan Titchmarsh Ground Force project.

Could you imagine a private business spending this sort of money on a landmark building, not knowing what to do with it, and then knocking it down and paving over it? The council hasn't revealed the cost of the 'bright, sweeping, multi-functional open space', but I would be surprised if it didn't run into seven figures. The market scheme cost £6.75 million, and of course there are the demolition costs, and the cost of maintaining all the shrubbery in the scheme. Money which would be better spent keeping the museum and art gallery open.

So here's a solution. The council bought the site at auction, why not do what any property developer with an abortive project would do, and stick it back in the auction? It might not get its £500,000 back, but sometimes you have to cut your losses. Let someone else have a go. Could a private company make a go of the theatre? What else could it use the site for? I've no idea. But I bet if it was the developer's own money, it would not involve topiary and block-paving.



Skipper and John during their European tour



The Jack Russell just loves travelling on the water



Skipper at the Leaning Tower of Pisa

Skipper's Taylor-made for a life of adventure

A cheeky Jack Russell terrier is making waves as probably the area's most well-travelled dog. **PETE MADELEY reports**

HE'S sailed on a 54ft yacht to the Caribbean and caught lobster with his bare teeth.

Skipper, probably the region's most well-travelled dog, has also sat astride a Harley Davidson at a biker festival in the south of France and been banned from the Mount Blanc pétanque competition for interfering with the balls.

Over the last decade the mischievous Jack Russell has undertaken transatlantic flights and sailed thousands of miles on numerous trips to the far-flung corners of the world with his travelling partner John Taylor, aged 48.

The pair have recently returned from their latest holiday, a nine-week European tour by van that took in France, Switzerland, Italy, Andorra and Spain.

"He's a fantastic travelling companion," said Mr Taylor. "He'll eat anything – including a nice bit of steak – and gets on with every-one."

Yacht

Skipper's first venture abroad came long after Mr Taylor had taken him on as a puppy. The pair flew to the Canary Islands in 2008 and from there sailed on Mr Taylor's 54ft (16.5m) Hallberg-Rassy yacht to Rodney Bay in the Caribbean island of St Lucia.

He loved it straight away," said Mr Taylor, a property developer who is also a commercial skipper.

"Because the yacht was a decent size he had plenty of room to stretch his legs and he absolutely loved the water.

"He taught himself how to catch lobsters with his teeth and he had a go on a paddle board. I've struggled to get him off it since."

In 2011, the duo embarked on a boat trip from Falmouth to the Azores and spent five months sailing around the coast of Portugal.



Adventure dog Skipper and John Taylor on the canal in Wheaton Aston

This summer they ditched the yacht and loaded up a silver VW Camper van for a European adventure.

Accompanied by Mr Taylor's partner, Frances, the intrepid travellers went through the Channel Tunnel and passed through the champagne region of France before heading into Switzerland and on to Mont Blanc.

"He caused a few problems during the local boules competition," recalled Mr Taylor. "At one point he ran onto the playing area and ended up getting banned for interfering with play. They take their pétanque very seriously over there but I think they saw the funny side of it."

Skipper, now aged 10, then proved a star turn at a biker rally in the French beach town of Cap d'Agde, posing for pictures with bikers while sitting on a Harley.

He also fetched some holy water in Lourdes,

chased around after birds of prey at a medieval festival in Andorra and ran around the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

But despite all the fun and frolics, Mr Taylor, who lives in Weston-under-Lizard, said travelling with Skipper can be an expensive and often complicated endeavour.

During flights Skipper is placed in the hold, at a cost £750 for a flight to the Canary Islands and over £1,000 for transatlantic. Before departing he is inspected at St George's Vets in Wolverhampton, where any injections that are required are also administered.

He then has to be looked at again on his return to the UK. For long haul flights a dog passport is required.

"When we sailed to St Lucia he couldn't get off the boat until a local vet had come and given him the once over," Mr Taylor recalled.

"It was the same every time we sailed into



The dog even has to get used to the cold

a new port. It's a strange situation as he is classed as a livestock import and once he sets foot on land he is deemed a resident of that particular country.

"In other places, such as Morocco, he stays on the boat because he has to go in quarantine if he enters the country.

"It is a costly and time consuming process, so I tend to research the places we plan to visit."

According to Mr Taylor a tour of Scandinavia on a large adventure motorbike is next on the agenda. "He is like an extension to my family and he'll always be part of my travel plans," he said.

"I have two daughters but I probably treat him like he is human. We'll need to get a special box made for him so he can fit on the motorbike, and if it goes well then who knows, maybe we'll take on Route 66?"

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It's time we listened to Putin's words

I HAVE no political affiliations and until recently believed in the freedom and impartiality of the Press. However, I would like to point something out to your readers that has been given the silent treatment and ignored by the Western media.

On August 4, Vladimir Putin, the Russian president, addressed the Duma and gave a speech about the tensions with minorities in Russia as follows: "In Russia, live like Russians. Any minority from anywhere, if it wants to live in Russia, to work and eat in Russia, it should speak Russian and should respect Russian laws.

"If they prefer Sharia Law and live the life of Muslims, then we advise them to go to those places where that's the state law.

"Russia does not need Muslim minorities. Minorities need Russia and we will not grant them special privileges, or try to change our laws to fit their desires, no matter how loud they yell 'discrimination'. We will not tolerate disrespect of our Russian culture.

"The Muslims are taking over those countries and they will not take over Russia. The Russian customs and traditions are not compatible with the lack of culture or the primitive ways

of Sharia Law and Muslims. When this honourable legislative body thinks of creating new laws, it should have in mind the Russian national interest first, observing that the Muslim minorities are not Russians."

The politicians in the Duma gave Putin a five-minute standing ovation. I'm no political analyst or racist, but in my humble opinion, this man has the interests of his own people at heart and some of our political leaders could do worse than to take a leaf from his book.

THOMAS PAINE
Aldridge

Availability of guns is to blame

THE atrocity in Paris, with 129 mostly young lives lost, is yet another example of the age of terror each and every one of us lives in.

The availability of high-powered weapons to the masses is obviously a contributing factor and our friends across the pond in the United States (a country I greatly admire) must bear some responsibility for this with their political 'hot potato' second amendment allowing anyone to be armed.

Thankfully there are many more mass killings there than in the UK. The highly sophisticated and deadly weapons such as the AK-47 should only be available to the military.

If limitations were imposed permitting only single or six round weapons be available to the public, over a period of time the more powerful ones would be taken out of circulation. It would take time for any effect to manifest but it would be a start.

G PAYNE
Walsall

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Staff crisis worsens despite nurse influx

HUNDREDS of foreign nurses are being drafted in to hospitals across the Black Country as NHS Chiefs urgently step up efforts to tackle a deepening staff crisis.

Nurses recruited from as far away as the Philippines are the latest to join the region's hospitals due to increasing problems finding staff in the UK or Europe and expensive Agency nursing costs. This is a 'sticking plaster' solution for the short term it does not resolve the underlying systemic failure.

Recruitment problems are among the key drivers for the worsening financial

crisis in the Health Service with recent figures revealing that NHS trusts in England are £1.6 billion in the red, the worst deficit on record.

Over recent years nurse numbers have been cut to meet government demands to balance the books. Nurses from Spain, Portugal, Croatia and Greece have made up the shortfall in trained staff.

We need a substantial investment across The Black Country and a long term solution that trains and retains the skilled staff we need to care for our own.

CLLR DOUG JAMES
Walsall

Picture was lovely to see

I SAW with interest this week's Pictures from the Past with the picture of Joe Mallen and his Crufts champion dog Gentleman Jim.

My father bred Staffordshire Bull Terriers from late 1930 to the 1950s and I remember being taken as a child to the Cross Guns in Cradley where we went into the cellar and saw the dogs comfortably settled there.

Joe Mallen and my father were friends and Gentleman Jim was sire to pups from our dog Saucy Ciss. I have several kennel club pedigree forms with their names and also Mallen's Nell.

K SMITH
Willenhall

Big thank you

BURNTWOOD Lions would like to say a very big thank you to the people of Burntwood, and the many volunteers who helped to make our craft fair last Saturday such a success.

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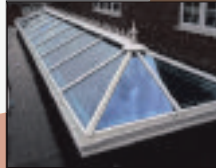
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Rescuer father may have succumbed to sink holes

A FATHER from Walsall who tragically drowned while trying to save his daughter could have been sucked under water by sink holes in the river bed, an inquest heard.

Dean Price went into the River Esk at Longtown, Cumbria, after seven-year-old Delilah slipped and fell into the water.

Mr Price, a 32-year-old maintenance man, made desperate efforts to keep his daughter's head above the deep water.

The youngster was rescued by Geoff Maxwell, a joiner and off-duty retained firefighter who was working nearby.

However, Mr Price went under the fast-moving, swirling water and disappeared from view. His body was found several hours later by divers.

An inquest into the death of Mr Price, of Walsall, West Midlands, was held in Carlisle last week.

It was said that the "fit and healthy" married man died as a result of immersion - most likely drowning.

Senior Cumbria coroner David Roberts concluded that his death was an accident. Mr Roberts praised the intervention of Mr Maxwell, from Langholm, who told the hearing how he bravely pulled Delilah to safety.

The inquest heard that Mr Price, his wife Kelly and their four children were staying near Carlisle on June 30.

After working in the morning, Mr Price and his family headed to a scenic spot by the River Esk at Longtown around mid-afternoon.

Mrs Price, who could not swim, stayed on the bank with their eight-month-old baby Hosanna. Her husband and the three other children - Emmanuel, aged nine, Montanna, eight, and Delilah - went for a paddle in the water.

In a statement Mrs Price said: "I



Dean Price, who tragically died in July



Geoff Langholm, who rescued Delilah



Emergency services at the river Esk - courtesy Cumbrian Newspapers Ltd

saw Dean and Delilah in the middle of the river and I saw them go under the water. The next thing I know, a man came and helped."

That was 52-year-old Mr Maxwell, who had been working at a house nearby. Having heard Mrs Price's screams, he rushed to the river bank, removing his boots and a sweater.

Mr Maxwell went into the water

having seen Delilah's head appear. "I dived in towards that spot. Just by sheer chance, sheer luck, I touched her under the water," he told the inquest. "I grabbed her hair and pulled her out."

Photographs produced at the inquest showed a sign on Longtown Bridge which warned: "It is dangerous to bathe in the river."



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Sleigh day is one to remember



Father Christmas with Mason Jones, aged eight, and his sister Megan, four, after winning the competition

CHRISTMAS came early for one lucky Walsall schoolboy after he won a special sleigh ride with Santa in a competition held recently.

On Saturday November 21, eight-year-old Mason Jones was the VIP guest after he won Victorian Arcade Shopping Centre's 'Design a Christmas Tree' competition.

The competition ran throughout November, and invited children aged 11 and under to draw, paint, colour or decorate the Christmas tree of their dreams. With over 150 entries from local youngsters, the competition was fierce and entries were of an exceptionally high standard.

Only one child could win the competition however and Mason's tree was declared the winner due to his unique hand printing technique to make the branches, as well as his use of battery lights which cleverly lit up the tree behind the picture giving it an amazing glow.

He received a host of presents including a number of Lego Bionicle toys, a hamper of chocolate and a 2016 calendar from his favourite football club West Bromwich. If that weren't enough, Mason's school Delves Junior School in Walsall was awarded £100 to spend towards their art department and/or festive celebrations.

Council sets £860k aside to tackle 'toxic trio'

ALMOST £900,000 will be spent tackling the 'toxic trio' of domestic abuse, mental ill health and substance misuse in Walsall.

Families and young people will get extra support under plans unveiled by Walsall Council. Bosses plan to set aside £860,000 from the 2016/17 budget to fund additional advisers to target problems before they arise.

By Jordan Harris

At present, people suffering from domestic abuse in the borough can access help through five independent domestic violence advisers employed by the council.

For younger people there is only a single independent adviser. There are also volunteer staff and third sector groups, such as Ainna or Walsall Black Sisters, who can offer help or advice.

The council are planning to use the £860,000 to try and increase support to voluntary sector staff, train current staff, develop prevention programmes for families showing early signs of being affected by the 'toxic trio' and gain industry expertise on how to tackle the issue.

The long term aim of the plans is to reduce the number of looked-after children

in the borough, as well as removing three agency social worker posts by 2018.

In 2014/15, there were 5,629 referrals made to the council's children's social care team, of which 3,966 were due to neglect, behaviour or domestic abuse. In the same period, 2734 cases were referred to the Domestic Abuse Referral Team.

A report by Assistant Director Early Help Andrea Potts said: "The 2016/17 draft budget includes an £860,000 'invest to save' proposal aimed at reducing and mitigating the impact of 'toxic trio' in Walsall enabling families to exercise choice in their lives, challenging the behaviour of perpetrators and reducing the need for children to become looked after."

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Academy on target with new three-storey base



An artist's impression of how the Joseph Leckie Academy's new building will look after its opening in March next year

THIS is the latest view of a multi-million pound Walsall academy which will provide 21 new classrooms when complete.

The three-storey building is emerging at the Joseph Leckie Academy site in Walstead Road West, Delves.

The new build will replace part of the main teaching block which dates back more than 70 years at the east end of the school. It is going up near the Colin Beilby building which was finished just six years ago.

The school had been battling for investment for several years. Money had originally been allocated under the La-

bour Government's Building Schools for the Future programme which was scrapped in 2010. No further construction has taken place since then.

Walsall Council gave the go-ahead to the revamp earlier this year. Concerns had been raised over the loss of trees to make space for the building. With a brook running through the site, there was also an issue with the lack of an updated flood assessment. The plan was passed subject to a new flood survey.

The school bid for a further £4m from the Government's education funding agency to provide further facilities including a sixth form, ICT and computing classrooms, dining and administrative areas but the application was turned down in April.



The building is seen taking shape

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Rambling through the countryside

THE Walsall group of the Ramblers will be heading out twice this weekend and are inviting walking enthusiasts to join them.

On Saturday, the group will be taking part in their winter programme of short walks.

The group will meet on the car park of Oak Park Leisure Centre at 9.30am before taking part in a 4.5 mile-walk

on Cannock Chase. This walk is part of a programme of short Saturday walks that run fortnightly.

The walks are aimed at those who are either new to rambling or haven't walked for a while.

On Sunday, the group will head to Cookley, near Kidderminster, for a nine-mile walk.

The circular 'North Worcester Wan-

derings' is a moderate walk which takes place on field paths, woodland tracks and on towpaths through the picturesque villages of Wolverley, Cookley and Caunsell.

Newcomers are welcome and anyone wishing to take part should call 01922 683616 or 01922 685672.

For more information visit www.walsallramblers.co.uk

Landmark former steam mill is no more



The former steam mill at Corn Hill, Wolverhampton, has been demolished to make way for a car park

THE eyesore site of a former steam mill in the Black Country is to be cleared after demolition works were completed.

The building at Corn Hill has been pulled down, and it signals the next stage in the development of Wolverhampton's £120 million transport interchange.

Contractors from DSM have finished bringing down the old mill, which was situated near the Willenhall Road out of the city, ahead of schedule.

The Grade II-listed building was left in a poor state after a fire in 2008, and demolition work began two months

ago after structural engineers concluded it could not be safely repaired and was dangerous.

Now the building has been demolished, the site can be cleared and preparations can begin to redevelop the multi-storey car park at the railway station. Work will start next year and will double the capacity of the car park. At the same time, the former steam mill site will be readied for work to extend the Metro from St George's to the railway station which, once completed, will enable Corn Hill to be reopened to road vehicles.

The railway station and surround-

ing area will be transformed as part of the interchange project, led by Neptune Developments and Wolverhampton council, which will create a modern gateway to the city centre including a new station, enhanced facilities for motorists and cyclists and new Metro link.

Councillor Peter Bilson, cabinet member for city assets, said: "The poor condition and complex nature of this building made it very challenging to pull down safely, and I am pleased with the way engineers from DSM were able to successfully complete the task as quickly and safely as they did."

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Festive gifts from clubs get red card

CLOTHES pegs painted in West Brom's blue and white have topped a list of the worst Christmas presents being sold by Premier League clubs...

However when looking at other merchandise being sold at other Midland football clubs it is apparent the colourful pegs are in good company.

Family members scratching their heads over to what to get a Wolves fan can find a dinner bell with the club's crest on the handle, costing £6.

Villa supporters meanwhile can chomp on their club's official wine gums or fudge, both £1, while watching their team from the stands.

And how exactly would Walsall fans make sure they could see their favourite players in action without snapping up a £2 pair of binoculars?

Worst

Our clubs boast some weird and wonderful stocking fillers and gifts for Christmas.

Alan Cleverley, secretary of West Brom's supporters club, said: "I was actually bought a set of those clothes pegs by a mate."

"We always try and outdo each other by buying the worst presents possible."

"Having said that I do think there is some good stuff in the Albion shop and I particularly like buying their golf gloves because they are very good quality."



The infamous Baggies clothes pegs

"I also like buying the golf balls with the badges on – but I keep losing them."

"The standard over the last few years has really improved and for younger people there are all those mobile phone and computer accessories, so I bet they love them."

"I was actually out shopping with my granddaughter the other day and I was pointing out what they could buy me for Christmas. You can never have too many golf gloves because they can wear out quite quickly."

Another present is the Albion metal dog bowl for £7.99 along with diving duck with plug at £4.99.

For those wishing to buy a more serious gift, a WBA home goalkeeper shirt will set you back £54.99.

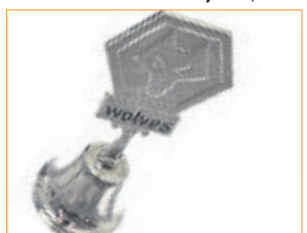
If Saddlers fans are not taken by the replica binoculars, perhaps a £1 pencil sharpener is more their cup of tea?

Adult training shower jackets cost £50.

Steve Davis, secretary of Walsall Football Supporters Trust, said: "I don't think there's anything too bad that really stands out in our club shop. But I have to say the onesies are just wrong – but then again I think they're all wrong. The worst thing I ever bought was



Winter warmer – Wolves jacket, £70



Ring the changes – dinner bell, £6



Getting it 'write' with a pencil case, £5

probably the mascot, Swift's, old costume online. I just thought it was a bit of a one-off but when it came through the post it was massive. I suppose the worse thing I could think of buying a Walsall fan for Christmas would be a Wolves half season ticket."

Wolves are selling force jackets in charcoal black for £70 but the bizarre dinner bell costs a mere £6. And, for those with a spare £1 in your pocket, a 30cm ruler is on offer. Aston Villa's worst offering – an astro turf sign cost-



All grown-up – an adult shirt, £54.99



Dog's dinner – metal food bowl, £7.99



Come clean with a diving duck plug, £4.99

ing £4 – should arguably have charted higher than eighth in the list of worse Christmas presents. The club, as well as selling its own range of confectionary, also stocks Aston Villa dog doorstops for £18.

For the more classy fan, a set of engraved Villa brandy glasses start at £50.

The list of tacky presents compiled by GambleGeek also included a £25 Bournemouth hard hat and Crystal Palace tape measures if they have a spare £4.99.



All-weather training – jacket, £50



Put football in focus – binoculars, £2



Make a point with a pencil sharpener, £1

Sunderland's dog lead emblazoned with the club's crest is on there, priced at £7.99, while a flashing yo-yo for Stoke City supporters also features.

Cockerel tinsel is available for Spurs fans costing £5 and Man City have thankfully produced a £10 garden thermometer.

Rounding off the top 20 worst buys are Swansea ladies' perfume at £15, Everton aftershave at £15 and a £40 Norwich City striped fleece onesie.



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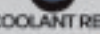
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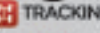
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Perky pigs help bag farm latest awards



Essington Fruit Farm pie technician Helen Naylor with award-winning produce from this year's English Winter Fair

THE happiness of pigs at a farm near Willenhall is key to its award-winning meats, according to delighted bosses. Staff at Essington Fruit Farm are celebrating a 10-medal haul at the prestigious English Winter Fair at Staffordshire County Showground.

There were gold medals for the farm's gammon and bacon products as well as its traditional free range pork sausages and its sausages with a new combination of pork and lamb. The other six medals were all silver for the farm's hand-crafted meat pies.

All the pork is produced on site by a team of 50 staff overseeing 500 different pig varieties.

Even the lamb for its combination sausages is sourced locally from nearby farms.

Owner Richard Simkin, said: "The pigs are kept in their natural environment and can run around and root up the grass and generally have a contented life.

"The pig meat is then processed on the premises and the bacon dry cured here. Everything is hand-made here."

He added: "These sorts of awards are very pleasing."

Facewatch scheme to target the shoplifters

MORE than 40 businesses in Walsall have signed up to a new police scheme aimed at tackling shoplifting in the town.

The crime-fighting scheme allows firms to upload images of suspected shoplifters to a free-to-download app called Facewatch that can be seen by shoppers, other businesses and the police.

Facewatch allows smart-phone and tablet users to search for crime suspects thought to be operating in their area and to view their images. Since West Midlands Police brought in the technology two years ago around 6,000 suspects' images have been uploaded to the site. It is now being widened to cover Walsall.

It is hoped that Facewatch will not only help to bring thieves to justice, but remove the opportunity for shoppers to have their retail therapy ruined by callous pickpockets or purse dipper.

The app allows smart-phone and tablet users to search for crime suspects thought to be operating in their area and to view their images.

More than 100 people have been arrested, having been identified by members

By Heather Large

of the public, since the technology was brought in.

Walsall Council deputy leader Councillor Adrian Andrew said: "Known criminals who think about trying to take advantage of the seasonal shopping in Walsall Town Centre will need to think twice."

Kate Bowers, interim head of Communities and Public Protection said: "This initiative will enable the businesses in Walsall Town Centre to join forces with Safer Walsall Partnership to work collaboratively and tackle crime in the town centre."

The app can be downloaded on iPhones, iPads, BlackBerry and Android devices and accessed directly via a web browser at <http://www.facewatchid.co.uk/>

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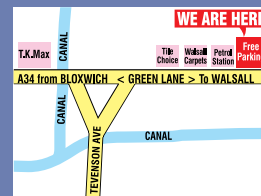
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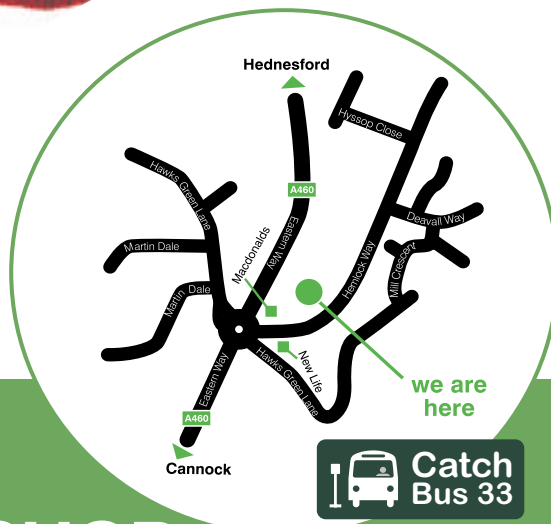
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Deck the tree with leather ornaments



Assistant curator at the museum, Francesca Cox with some of the leather Christmas decorations

FAMILIES can give their Christmas decorations a traditional Black Country twist at Walsall Leather Museum.

From gingerbread men to stars and hearts, visitors can try their hand at making their own leather mementos for the tree. It follows successful workshops which ran during the school summer holidays. Aimed at families, visitors will be able to sew and decorate a range of leather trinkets. There will be a variety of shapes available for people to choose from. The drop-in workshop will run from 10.30am until 3.30pm on December 5 at the Littleton Street site.

There is no need to book with staff inviting people to just turn up at any time during the day. Assistant curator Francesca Cox said: "We decided to run this event because we ran leather drop workshops during the summer holidays and they were phenomenally successful."

It will cost £1 per decoration to take part in the workshop. On December 11, the museum will host a question day for experts.

Leather working demonstrations are held throughout the day on Tuesday to Saturday between 10am and 4pm.

Extremism message for pupils with play

NEARLY 2,500 Walsall schoolchildren have been learning how to deal with different forms of extremism thanks to a touring theatre company.

Actors from the Saltmine Theatre Company have been performing at five schools in Walsall to encourage students to challenge extremism and explore what it really means.

The Stand For It play portrayed a white British young man who is radicalised into far right politics by his dad and a British-Asian Muslim who is brainwashed by Islamic extremists through the internet.

Before the play, which ends in a violent clash at a factory strike, actors asked students to consider what extremism means to them.

A discussion at the end of the performance centred on suggesting what the two young men could have done to prevent the violence.

It has toured Joseph Leckie Academy, Bloxwich Academy, Walsall Academy, Aldridge School, and Grace Academy, with nearly 2,400 people having seen it.

Statistics gathered by the troupe suggested that prior to seeing the play, only 28 per cent of students claimed

to know a fair amount or a lot about extremism, whilst after seeing the play that figure rose to 82 per cent.

The tour was financed by a grant from Near Neighbours, a charity that works to bring people together in religiously and ethnically diverse communities.

Tim Burton-Jones, of Near Neighbours, said: "The work that these actors are doing is of immense value."

Head of the Joseph Leckie Academy's personal development programme, Ben Edge said: "We've very much enjoyed having the 'Stand For It' play being performed within the Academy."

It tackled a very sensitive and pressing issue in an engaging and relevant way."

By Amardeep Bassey

Sham marriage fixer has to pay back £18,000

A SHAM marriage fixer who was jailed for more than six years in January this year has been ordered to pay back £18,000 under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

A confiscation order was granted at Northampton Crown Court, against Zafar Abbas, aged 46, of Bescot Street, Walsall. The judge ordered that the money must be paid back within six months or a further 10 month sentence will be imposed. Abbas was one of the key players in setting up sham marriages between Indians and Eastern Europeans.

Karate couple are chop of the pile



Black belts – Wayne Keough and Debbie Challinor
TWO Walsall karate instructors have been inducted into The Martial Arts Hall of Fame for their fundraising efforts in aid of medical research for children with cancer.

Black-belts Debbie Challinor, aged 37, and her partner Wayne Keough, 43, run the Bushido Martial Arts centre, teaching karate and various forms of ju jitsu. They were inducted into the prestigious hall of fame on November 15 by renowned kick-boxer Bob Sykes.

Debbie, who is a first grade black belt in Karate Jutso, said the couple had spent a year travelling across the UK holding free classes and seminars in support of the Martial Artists Supporting Children with Cancer charity. She said: "The charity concept was developed by Nottingham-based Ju jitsu instructor Lucie Del-Gaudio, who approached us at the beginning of 2015."

In January, he was sentenced to six years and three months in jail after being found guilty of five counts of conspiracy to facilitate a breach of immigration law. Also jailed at the same time was a second organiser and five other men and women who took part in the weddings.

The marriages were organised in a bid for the non-European nationals to obtain leave to stay in the UK, and took place at Shrewsbury register office between January and March 2014.

Inspector Andy Radcliffe, from Home Office Criminal and Financial Investigations, said: "The ruling sends a clear message that our investigations do not stop once we have secured a conviction."

A sham marriage or civil partnership typically occurs when a non-European national marries someone from the European Economic Area as a means of attempting to gain long-term residency in the UK. Anyone with information on suspected immigration abuse can contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or visit <http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org>

Boxes of help on way to youngsters

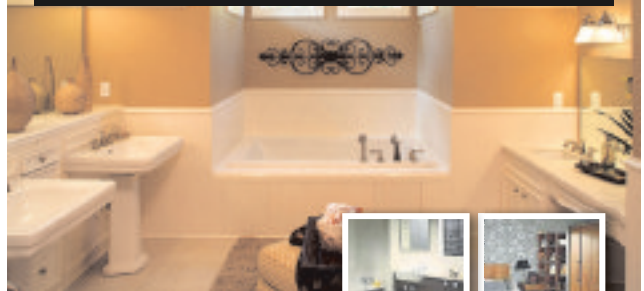
STAFF and students at a Walsall secondary school came together to donate more than 400 shoeboxes filled with Christmas gifts for charity.

The donations were made by pupils and teachers at Queen Mary's High School, with each shoe box containing toiletries, toys, games and clothing to be sent to children in Eastern Europe.

The teacher who came up with the idea of making the donations, Miss Anna Gottschall, said: "It was wonderful to see so many of our students taking an active role in contributing to and assisting with this project."

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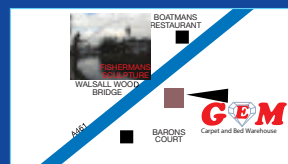
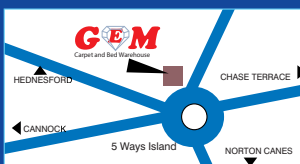
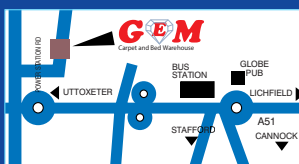
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Sue Satterthwaite with A Patriotic Endeavour about the role of Aldridge Manor House



The Little Aston Road building, mainly now a youth centre



Staff at Aldridge Manor House where wounded soldiers were treated during the Great War

How manor became a hospital after wartime community pulled together

THE story of how a manor house took in sick and injured servicemen during the First World War has been written in a book compiled and financed by locals.

During the conflict, the people of Aldridge came together to convert Aldridge Manor House into an auxiliary convalescent hospital for wounded soldiers injured in conflict.

More than 100 years later, the community has once again come together, this time to compile, A Patriotic Endeavour.

The book, written by local historians Sue Satterthwaite and Len Boulton, was put together after letters and documents detailing the project, which had been kept in the family of a late GP from the area, were discovered.

Sue, who founded the Aldridge Great War Project, which aims to record the area's contribution to the First World War effort, said: "The book tells of how the residents

MEMORY LANE

Report by Jordan Harris

of Aldridge donated not just money but also items needed for the hospital such as brooms, buckets and bedding.

"It also tells of the selfless dedication of the team who ran it, including a committee and a group of lady collectors who went door to door every week collecting subscriptions to keep the hospital running.

Dedication

"But the greatest praise should go to the women and girls of Aldridge who cared for the patients day and night for more than three years, even though most of them had no formal training, and also to the village doctor who was in charge of medical services."

As the book began to take shape, Sue and Len asked residents to rally together to help cover the cost of the publication, just

as they had when converting the historic Manor House – one of Aldridge's oldest buildings – all those years ago.

Len said: "The requests for information led to more exciting discoveries, particularly pages from an autograph book which had been kept by Nurse Clare.

"Not only had the patients signed her book, they had also written rhymes and done sketches.

"As soon as we saw them we knew they had to be included in the book."

"The response from people in Aldridge was overwhelming after we asked for their help and Sue and I are very grateful for the support we have received.

"We really hope that people will find this an interesting and heart-warming account of local people and of one of our most-loved buildings."

The book is on sale priced £9.99, with every penny raised going to the Aldridge Great War Project thus enabling more of Aldridge's fascinating First World War history to be shared and recorded.

The book can be purchased from: Aldridge Library, Lynda's, The Thomas Project, Croft News, Simply Delicious, Walsall Garden Centre, Walsall Local History Centre and Waterstones, Walsall.

The Aldridge Great War Project dates back to 2013.

It follows a group of local people getting together to consider how Aldridge might commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Great War.

By the time of the official launch of the Aldridge Great War Project (AGWP) on August 4, 2014 – exactly 100 years on from when England declared war on Germany, Aldridge School and local organisations, groups and businesses had pledged their support.

They aim to research and record every Aldridge person who made a contribution to the Great War, to help local people to discover their own Great War ancestry and to broaden the knowledge and understanding of how the war affected individuals and the community.



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Carvers accolade for HQ relaunch

A BUILDING materials supplier in Wolverhampton has won a top industry award after relaunching its city base following a fire.

Carvers' Little's Lane site was destroyed in February 2012 after the blaze began in the firm's timber warehouse.

But last year the company opened its new builders' village, showrooms and cafe.

The relaunch campaign included Hollywood-style billboards advertising 'Carvers 2 the Return' and a line-up of workers. It has now won the Marketing Initiative of the Year award at the Builders Merchants News Awards, held at the Lancaster London hotel.

Rachel Groom, Marketing Manager, said: "To win the award and be recognised for such an achievement within the industry is wonderful and marks the first anniversary in our new premises perfectly."



Little Rascals co-owners Ben Wootton, back left, and Dave Edwards, with excited children

Wolves player's new venture is child's play

WOLVES player Dave Edwards has kicked off an exciting new venture by opening an indoor soft play centre. The move already has the seal of approval from his Molineux team mates.

The Welsh international midfielder launched Little Rascals, aimed at children up to the age of 10, at the Maverick Business Park in Monkmoor, Shrewsbury. He successfully applied to change the use of a 5,000 sq ft former bathroom showroom, with co-owner Ben Wootton, a lifelong friend.

It will be open every day of the week and has created 10 new jobs. Mr Edwards, a father-of-two, said: "We knew there was a big demand for somewhere

like this in the town.

"We've put a lot of time and effort into making sure everything is right."

The soft play centre also includes its own football pitch complete with nets and basketball hoops plus a sensory room, ideal for young babies and children with special needs.

Mr Edwards, who began his career at Shrewsbury Town, added team mates Carl Ikeme and Scott Golbourne had already paid a visit to Little Rascals with their families.

"I'll also have to entice a few of my old team mates from Shrewsbury down with their children," he said.

Praise for female Pc who tackled shop thief

AN off-duty police officer who chased down a shoplifter and pinning him to the ground while being bitten on the leg has received praise from force bosses.

Pc Laura Niblett was one of 82 new recruits at West Midlands Police last year.

Just months into her new career she was in Wolverhampton when she gave chase to a thief she spotted walking out of a shop with three bottles of spirits.

Despite being off duty at the time she gave chase, dragged the 41-year-old man down from a fence as he tried to escape and restrained him on the ground as he lashed out, even sinking his teeth into her thigh.

Supporting officers quickly arrived to arrest the man. On October 19 he was jailed for 14 days by city magistrates and ordered to pay £510 in costs and charges.

Another student who came in for praise was student Pc Laura Johnson who was one of the first officers on the scene at a bus crash in Coventry in October in which a boy and an elderly lady died.

Shock

The 25-year-old was nearby dealing with a low-level disorder when she was thrown into the chaos.

She said: "A crowd of several hundred people had gathered and it was clear some people on the bus and witnesses were in shock. Others were being nosy and even filming it on phones."

"Firearms officers were trying to save the lady while PCSOs escorted people off the bus. At that stage there were no senior officers to direct me so I had to use my initiative to help out."

"I could see the crowd were too close and in danger of obstructing police and paramedics so I had to try and manage the scene and keep the crowd back."

"I was there for nearly seven hours in the end until about midnight. The experience highlighted what



Pc Laura Niblett – praise

we'd been told throughout training: as a police officer you have to be prepared for anything."

The 82 recruits taken on by the force in October last year were quickly followed by 80 more.

Sergeant Christian Harrison, from the force's training department, said: "We've taken on a range of characters – a real cross-section of the community – and that's a good thing because we don't want a group of 'bots' who all act in the same way."

"There are quiet, methodical types and some enthusiastic characters that need a little reining in."

"Even after just a few weeks you start to get a feel for what roles within policing each may be most suited to and where their skills will best fit in."

Last week the force revealed it is to cut its number of PCSOs by more than 400 over the next five years.

The number will fall from 535 to 119, a reduction of 416 positions, as part of a plan to make £130m of savings by 2020.

Lawyers win awards

THREE Wolverhampton Council lawyers won gongs at the national Lawyers in Local Government awards.

Solicitor advocate Adam Sheen was crowned litigation lawyer of the year, solicitor Jessica Adeniran was named placed-related lawyer of the year, while chartered legal executive David Cockfield is the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEX) lawyer of the year award.

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White Christmas at the Grand – Page 21



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Dream of a Grand White Christmas

WITH weather forecasts threatening the white stuff and yuletide fast approaching, festive favourite, **White Christmas**, staged by South Staffs Musical Theatre Company, has arrived at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre.

The musical opened this week and continues through to Saturday with nightly performances at 7.30pm, plus a 2.30pm matinee on Saturday.

Irving Berlin's classic Christmas offering, which became a 1954 movie starring Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, Rosemary Clooney and Vera Allen, is a relatively new stage adaptation for amateur performance.

The score includes a host of well-known songs including Count Your Blessings, Let Yourself Go, Happy Holidays, Blue Skies, I Love A Piano and, of course, the title song.

Simon McGee from Lower Gornal is playing Bing Crosby's character, Bob Wallace. "It was a fantastic feeling when I found out I had got the part of Bob Wallace in **White Christmas**," says Simon. "I mean, to play the male lead in this wonderful show at Christmas is the icing on the cake in a very special year for me."

"It has been an amazing experience, but very challenging, especially the dancing. I think I have lost a stone in weight during the gruelling regime that our choreographer, Maria Shee has put us through."

"I love playing opposite Lexie Bennett who plays Betty Hayes, Rebecca Haydon who plays her sister, Judy, and my cheeky chappy partner in



Rebecca Haydon and Lexie Bennett star in **White Christmas** at the Grand Theatre

crime, Luke Renwick who plays my sidekick, Phil Davis. We have had such a good giggle during rehearsals."

Lexie Bennett plays Bob's reluctant love interest, Betty Hayes, with Rebecca Haydon as her sister Judy. The girls have had great fun with their roles and in particular have enjoyed

singing the classic duet Sisters complete with huge feather fans.

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Family life inspires Ed

MOCK the Week star Ed Byrne is an established touring favourite, and despite his youthful looks the Irishman recently marked up 20 years as a comic.

His latest show of observational comedy, **Outside, Looking In**, is at the Wulfrun Hall in Wolverhampton next Thursday (December 10) before the tour returns to the West Midlands at Birmingham Town Hall on February 19.

The new show covers a wide range of subjects – from a gastric illness to UKIP – but he talks a lot about his family. It's his most personal yet.

"I didn't make a conscious effort to write a more personal show, but that was what was coming out when I started writing it," Ed says.

"People come to see me for a laugh and I would like to think they go away thinking the show is quite heartwarming. A lot of comics may talk about the same stuff, but what makes it mine is that what I'm saying is what I genuinely think on this subject, and I try to make it as funny as I can. I think we all mine our lives to some degree or other."

Ed is adamant that he will keep his two young sons out of the celebrity spotlight, but in **Outside, Looking In**, he shows a picture of one of his sons – the denouement of a bittersweet story about buying new shoes – which not only illustrates it perfectly, but produces an "Aaaaah" moment.

"I'm aware that they haven't given me permission to talk about them and that there will come a point when I can't," Ed says. "I talk about them in pretty abstract terms, because what I'm discussing is the act of parenting, and you can't talk about that without mentioning your own children."

Music and laughter will rock the Robin

JAZZ and funk fans will be heading for Bilston's Robin 2 venue on Sunday for a rare Midlands appearance by American vibes player Roy Ayers and his Band. On stage at 8.30, Ayers has had R&B hits and been an inspiration to both acid jazz and hip-hop scenes.

Other tasty gigs at the Mount Pleasant venue include The Jam's bassist Bruce Foxton in the From The Jam Sound Affects Show tomorrow (Fri). Metal legends Tygers of Pan Tang on Monday, and the comedy genius of Neil Innes with his Beatles parody **The Rutles** on Tuesday. Wednesday sees the return of Worcestershire rock 'n' roller Mike Sanchez & The Portions.

Dynamo bringing his first live tour

TV magician Dynamo is bringing his Seeing Is Believing show to Birmingham Barclaycard Arena for five consecutive nights from Wednesday. He has added an extra performance at 2.30pm on December 12.

The hip street magician from Bradford, real name Steven Frayne, has amazed viewers with stunts that have included walking on water on the Thames and levitating above London skyscraper The Shard.

Dynamo says: "I am hoping that like I did for magic on TV, I can reinvent the live magic show and produce something fans have never seen before." Tickets start from £37.25.

Guy decides to get busier at 40

TAKING a break from his day job as the frontman of Ramsbottom's finest alternative rock quartet Elbow, Guy Garvey will be at the O2 Academy Birmingham tonight (Thu), touring in support of his debut solo effort, the critically-acclaimed **Court-ting The Squall**.

Why a solo album? He says: "I'm pretty sure it was the 40 thing. Around 40, I thought, I'm officially a middle-aged man. I should do more work. There should be more output than 10 songs every two years. I flung myself at it. There's a vastness to Elbow records, in places, almost a regal thing. This record is more rough and ready."

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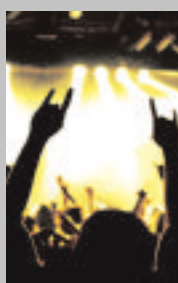
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Discerning and well-Red

With a bounty of exotic dishes to choose from, **MARK SHIPP** found India Red restaurant was the hottest ticket in town

"WE know there's competition, but if everyone knows their palate and knows their own food, they will tell the difference."

So says Zub Ahmed, proprietor of the India Red Restaurant in Hednesford. Having been there for 12 years, Zub and his restaurant have become established fixtures.

But, with a cluster of Indian restaurants within such a short distance, he knows he has to stay ahead of the game to keep his regular customers happy.

With that in mind, the menu is changed on a regular basis to offer new dishes, while the chef is known for either creating new lines or putting his own stamp on traditional ones.

And, it's fair to say that the 110-seat restaurant is doing very nicely for itself, thank you.

Ushered

It was a busy night in the Market Street premises when my partner and I ventured out. We had to wait a while for our meals, but that was no problem. The best things come those who wait, they say, and I always believe that quick service does not always represent the best quality. On this occasion, the food really was worth the wait. And there was enough left over for a mini-feast the following day.

Seating downstairs at India Red is provided for couples or small parties, while upstairs tends to cater for the larger groups. As it is open plan, however, my better half did comment on how noisy it might be.

Decor-wise India Red is tastefully done, with background music that one tends not to notice as it does little to drown out the general hub-bub from the diners.



The outside view of India Red restaurant, which can be found at 44, Market Street, Hednesford



The tasteful decor on show with seating available for over 100

Minor quibbles aside, the food is the main attraction. The poppadoms were moreish, but served only to whet the appetite for what was to come. We were asked to try out a range of starters, and other menu items we had not ordered found their way to our table. Generous, and obviously done to impress.

But while appreciated, it was also unnecessary as we felt suitably plished. And we'd already been impressed by the fare.

Zub explained that his Bangladeshi chef

had served eight years at India Red, but was always looking to improve on standards. He even took the time, despite the hectic evening, to explain some of the methods and ingredients behind some of the dishes.

Take the malai kofta, for example, meatballs in a sweet and spicy cheese sauce. It contains yoghurt and honey to give it that sweetness, and perfectly offset the Amritsar chicken, with its hidden kick due to garam masala and panch puran mix.

That was just a taster. The menu comprises traditional dishes and India Red specials, but the beauty is that each dish is colour-coordinated according to the heat factor, from a sweet and creamy grey to a red vindaloo hot.

My other half didn't need to worry about her tried and trusted makhani chicken, while I stepped into the unknown for the salmon surprise, the twist being that it actually wasn't a curry – and it came with chicken, in tiny pieces, added to a bed of mashed potatoes.

Not what I was expecting. Good, though, but without a curry it was dry, so the beef haleem – a newcomer to the menu – was a welcome accompaniment. And what a curry that was. It was mild, but had a tangy taste, emanating from its mix of spices, sugar and vinegar. Worth a visit for that alone.

India Red is open Sunday to Thursday from 5.30 to 11.30pm and until 1am on Friday and Saturday. It is currently taking bookings for Christmas. Call 01543 424769 or 426611.

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CHOICE



Declan Donnelly

I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! (ITV, 9pm)

Ant and Dec present the final of the 15th series, as the last famous faces left in the camp face the last challenges in the Australian jungle. Viewers' votes will decide who has been this year's favourite contestant, and when the results are in, this year's king or queen of the jungle will be crowned, before the last handful of contestants return home. The presenters will be catching up with the contestants later in the week for a special follow-up show as they return to normal life after the hardships of the Bush. Last in the series.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.25** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Fern Britton Meets Linnor Christie. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News. Weather. **1.15** Escape to the Country. **1.45** FA Cup Final Score. **4.15** Songs of Praise. **4.50** The Hunt. (R) **5.50** BBC News.

6.10 Regional Programme.

6.20 **Countryfile**. Ellie Harrison and Joe Crowley take a tour of some of Scotland's most remote scenic areas, visiting Britain's highest road, which runs 2,000 feet above sea level, meeting a couple who have made a new life as crofters, and discovering a fish that could solve all the salmon industry's problems. Plus, Tom Heap reports on the rising number of traffic accidents on rural roads and Adam Henson examines how straw may be the key to the UK's future energy production. Including Weather For The Week Ahead.

7.20 **Strictly Come Dancing: The Results**. Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman reveal the results of last night's musicals themed episode and another couple is eliminated.

8.00 **Antiques Roadshow**. Fiona Bruce presents the show from the Queen's private residence at Balmoral, where items brought in to be valued include a ceramic pot made by Pablo Picasso.

9.00 **The Hunt**. How predators hunt in coastal waters, where everything is in constant motion and opportunities have to be taken quickly. Featuring dolphins, octopuses and fishing wolves.

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 **Match of the Day 2**. Mark Chapman reviews the day's Premier League action between Newcastle United and Liverpool at St James' Park, as the Magpies looked for a win to move them up the table.

11.20 **Citizen Khan**. Amjad's mother threatens to solve her son and Shazia's housing problems by taking them with her to live in Bradford, while Mr Khan becomes convinced his grandson is psychic. (R)

11.50 **The Graham Norton Show**. (R)

12.35 Weather for the Week Ahead.

12.40 BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 The A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **7.00** Big Dreams Small Spaces. (R) **8.00** Countryfile. (R) **9.00** An Island Parish: Falklands. (R) **9.30** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.00** Len and Ainsley's Big Food Adventure. (R) **11.45** Terry and Mason's Great Food Trip. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Live Snooker: UK Championship. Coverage of the opening session of the final from York.

6.00 Match of the Day: FA Cup

Highlights. Action from the weekend's second-round matches, as the remaining sides from League One, League Two and non-league football looked to make it to round three and potentially lucrative games against Premier League or Championship opposition. Standout ties in this round included Hartlepool United's trip to Salford City – part-owned by former Manchester United stars Gary and Phil Neville, Paul Scholes, Ryan Giggs and Nicky Butt. Elsewhere, 2008 winners Portsmouth met Accrington Stanley, and Rochdale played Bury in an all-League-One affair.

7.00 Live Snooker: UK Championship.

Hazel Irvine presents coverage of the concluding session of the final from the Barbican Centre in York, as the tournament widely regarded as the second-most prestigious on the calendar comes to an end. Ronnie O'Sullivan won the title last year but is not taking part this time around, having been advised by doctors not to compete on the professional tour until the debilitating insomnia he has been suffering from improves. With a commentary team including Dennis Taylor, Stephen Hendry and Steve Davis. Subsequent programmes are subject to change.

11.00 **Film: Brooklyn's Finest**. (2009) Three Brooklyn police officers face contrasting personal dilemmas as their careers converge at a single moment. Crime thriller, starring Richard Gere.

1.05 Sign Zone: Countryfile. Artist Matt Sewell shows Ellie Harrison how he captures the character of birds, and John Craven visits a seed bank in Shropshire that is trying to preserve endangered trees. (R) **2.00** Holly City. Arthur and Morven struggle to rekindle their friendship after clashing over patient care, while Dom is distracted by a patient that he has fallen for. (R) **3.00** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.30** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Super 4. (R) **7.40** Matt Hatter Chronicles. **8.00** Marvel Avengers Assemble. **8.30** Fish Hooks. **8.45** Fish Hooks. **9.00** Jessie. **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.30** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.35** ITV News. Weather. **12.45** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **1.50** The Chase. (R) **2.55** The X Factor. (R) **4.30** Film: The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor. (2008) Fantasy adventure sequel, starring Brendan Fraser.

6.30 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.45 ITV News: Weather.

7.00 **Jeikyl and Hyde**. Part one of two. Robert struggles to control his transformations, and joins forces with a vigilante to investigate a series of strange killings in exchange for Kavi's freedom.

8.00 **The X Factor**. Caroline Flack and Olly Murs present the results of the weekend's viewers' vote, deciding which acts will be eliminated and who will be performing in next week's final.

9.00 **I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here!** Ant and Dec present the final of the 15th series, as the last famous faces left in the camp face the last challenges in the Australian jungle. Viewers' votes will decide who has been this year's favourite contestant, and when the results are in, this year's king or queen of the jungle will be crowned, before the last handful of contestants return home. The presenters will be catching up with the contestants later in the week for a special follow-up show as they return to normal life after the hardships of the Bush. Last in the series.

10.35 ITV News: Weather.

10.50 **Premiership Rugby Union**. Action from the latest round of fixtures in England's top flight, including Worcester Warriors v Leicester Tigers, Harlequins v London Irish and Wasps v Exeter Chiefs.

11.50 **Off Their Rockers**. The hidden-camera show continues. (R)

12.15 Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The King of Queens. (R) **6.35** Challenge Mallorca. **7.05** World Superbike Review of the Year. **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Noddy. (R) **7.05** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.20** Little Princess. (R) **7.30** Pip Ahoy! (R) **7.50** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.15** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.30** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **8.45** Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) **8.55** Jelly Jam. (R) **9.10** LazyTown. (R) **9.40** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.15** Football League Tonight. (R) **11.40** The Gadget Show. (R) **12.45** Film: Christmas Mix. (2014) Premiere. Romantic comedy, starring Haylie Duff. **2.30** Film: Call Me Claus. (2001) Christmas family drama, starring Whoopi Goldberg. **4.20** Film: Santa Who? (2000) Santa Claus crashes his sleigh and loses his memory. A youngster tries to help him beat the amnesia in time for Christmas. Family comedy, starring Leslie Nielsen.

6.10 **Film: Bruce Almighty**. (2003) God tires of a down-on-his-luck reporter's constant complaining, so passes on his powers to give him a taste of ultimate responsibility. The newsman falls in love with his extraordinary abilities – but a never-ending stream of incoming prayers and his ambitious attempt to please everyone soon prove there is more to the job than meets the eye. Comedy, starring Jim Carrey, Jennifer Aniston and Morgan Freeman.

8.10 **Film: Bulletproof Monk**. (2003) A mysterious Tibetan monk is entrusted with protecting an ancient and mystical scroll. As modern-day Nazis seek out the relic in a bid to resurrect the Third Reich, the monk searches for a suitable successor to take over his task – and a pickpocket is the unlikely choice. Martial arts thriller, starring Chow Yun-Fat, Seann William Scott, Jaime King, Victoria Smurft and Karel Rodin. Edited for violence.

9.55 **5 News Weekend**.

10.00 **Film: Django Unchained**. (2012) Premiere. An escaped slave becomes a bounty hunter and tries to rescue his wife from a sadistic plantation owner. Quentin Tarantino's Western, with Jamie Foxx and Christoph Waltz.

1.15 SuperCasino. **3.10** Ultimate Police Interceptors. (R) **4.00** House Doctor. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **5.45** Angels of Jarm. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **6.15** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.30** Ticky Toc. (R) **6.40** Zack and Quack. (R) **6.50** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.05** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.20** Little Princess. (R) **7.30** Pip Ahoy! (R) **7.50** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.15** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.30** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **8.45** Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) **8.55** Jelly Jam. (R) **9.10** LazyTown. (R) **9.40** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.15** Football League Tonight. (R) **11.40** The Gadget Show. (R) **12.45** Film: Christmas Mix. (2014) Premiere. Romantic comedy, starring Haylie Duff. **2.30** Film: Call Me Claus. (2001) Christmas family drama, starring Whoopi Goldberg. **4.20** Film: Santa Who? (2000) Santa Claus crashes his sleigh and loses his memory. A youngster tries to help him beat the amnesia in time for Christmas. Family comedy, starring Leslie Nielsen.

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9.55 5 News Weekend.

10.00 **Film: Django Unchained**. (2012) Premiere. An escaped slave becomes a bounty hunter and tries to rescue his wife from a sadistic plantation owner. Quentin Tarantino's Western, with Jamie Foxx and Christoph Waltz.

1.15 SuperCasino. **3.10** Ultimate Police Interceptors. (R) **4.00** House Doctor. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **5.45** Angels of Jarm. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Don't Tell the Bride **8.00** Top Gear **9.00** Russell Howard's Good News **9.30** Film: 8 Mile (2002) **11.15** Family Guy **12.45** American Dad! **12.25** Family Guy **12.45** Josh 1.15 People Just Do Nothing **3.15** Josh 3.45 Sunny D **4.00** Close

BBC Four
7.00 Concerto at the BBC Proms **7.25** Film: Pina: Legend of Dance (2011) **9.00** The Golden Age of Steam Railways **10.00** Film: Easy Money (2010) **12.00** Britain's Natural World: The Unnatural History of London **1.00** Britain's Deadliest Rail Disaster: Quintinshill **2.00** Horizon: Are We Alone in the Universe? **2.50** Natural World: Polar Bears and Grizzlies – Bears on Top of the World **3.40** Close

ITV2
11.00 The X Factor **12.35** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! **1.35** You've Been Framed Christmas! **2.55** Elf: Buddy's Musical Christmas **3.35** Film: The Polar Express (2004) **6.35** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! **6.40** Film: Back to the Future Part III (1990) **8.00** The Xtra Factor **10.00** You've Been Framed At Christmas! **10.35** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here Now! **11.35** Piers **12.35** Film: The Faculty (1998) **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV3
12.50 Film: Columbo: Now You See Him (1976) **2.50** Rosemary & Thyme **3.50** Wycliffe **4.55** Agatha Christie's Marple **7.00** Sunday Night at the Palladium **8.00** Lewis **10.00** Film: The Constant Gardener (2005) **12.30** Film: Till Death Us Do Part (1969) **2.25** Wycliffe **3.20** ITV3 Nightscreen **3.40** Emmerdale

ITV4
11.35 Shed and Buried **1.35** Pawn Stars **3.25** Film: The Burbs (1993) **5.30** Film: Blues Brothers 2000 (1998) **8.00** Premiership Rugby Union **9.00** Film: The Conqueror (1997) **11.05** Film: Daylight (1996) **1.20** Ray Mears' Close Encounters **2.15** Ax Men **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
12.35 Film: City of Ember (2008) **2.25** Couples Come Dine with Me **4.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: Rush Hour 3 (2007) **10.45** The Inbetweeners **11.50** The IT Crowd **12.55** Film: The Sitter (2011) **2.30** How I Met Your Mother **Film4**
1.00 Kiki's Delivery Service (1989) **3.10** Porridge (1979) **5.00** The Dark Crystal (1982) **6.50** The Three Musketeers (2011) **9.00** 71 (2014) **10.55** An Officer and a Gentleman (1982) **1.25** Summer in February (2013) **3.50** Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Lucky Christmas, Channel 5, 3.45pm
A single mother struggling to make ends meet thinks her problems are solved when she wins the lottery, only to lose the ticket before she can claim the money. A greedy construction worker offers to help her get it back in exchange for a share of the winnings, only to fall for her while they search for it. Romantic drama, with Elizabeth Berkley. (2011)

TUESDAY
A Bride for Christmas, Channel 5, 3.45pm
A woman swears off serious relationships after breaking off her third failed engagement, only to run into a man who seems perfect for her a month before Christmas. However, she does not realise he has made a bet with his friends that he can persuade a woman to marry him before the holiday begins. Romantic drama, with Arielle Kebbel. (2012)



300, Friday, ITV, 10.40pm

WEDNESDAY
Holiday Help, Channel 5, 3.50pm
A single mother is broke and desperate to get a job so she make her daughter's Christmas a happy one. With the help of an angel, she gets a position at a department store and meets the love of her life. Festive romantic drama, starring Alicia Witt. (2014)

THURSDAY
The Christmas Shepherd, Channel 5, 3.45pm
A widow is devastated when the German shepherd that is her only companion runs away. The dog ends up at an animal sanctuary, and is adopted by the kindly owner and his daughter. When the original owner finally tracks it down, she faces a hard choice between remaining alone and separating the animal from its newfound happiness. Drama, starring Teri Polo and Jordyn Ashley Olson. (2014)

FRIDAY
300, ITV, 10.40pm
Leonidas, fearless king of Sparta, leads 300 of his finest warriors into battle against the invading armies of the ruler of the Persian empire. As the outnumbered Spartans fight for their country, his queen, Gorgo, tries to rally support for her husband at home. Fantasy action adventure, starring Gerard Butler. (2006)

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Will Variety prove to be the spice of life?

It's been going since 1912, and even its name harks back to an earlier age of entertainment, but never let it be said that the Royal Variety Performance doesn't move with the times. This year, the show boasts its youngest ever host, comedian Jack Whitehall, who at 27 is no one's idea of a grizzled showbiz veteran. However, that doesn't mean he doesn't have the experience to helm such an occasion – he's become something of a Royal Variety regular. He says: "Having been lucky enough to perform for Prince Charles and Prince William in previous years, I look forward to the opportunity of selling a little too close to the wind in the presence of Prince Harry this time round." He added: "It's my third time on the show and I still am yet to perform in front of The Queen, she must be really desperate not to see my act."

In addition to amusing the royals, Whitehall has also co-written and starred in the sitcom *Bad Education*, which follows teacher Alfie Wickers.

However, tonight, the comedian's own ability to keep excitable teenagers in check may be put to the test, as there's at least one act on the bill who should get the younger audience members screaming. They may have recently announced their plans to take an extended break, but all-conquering boy band *One Direction* are still taking to the stage at the Royal Variety Performance, and they'll be joined by their fellow X Factor graduates *Little Mix*. But while there's definitely a youthful element to tonight's proceedings, older viewers needn't worry that the organisers have instituted a Logan's Run-style policy of only booking the under-thirties. As ever, the show offers something for everyone. If the members of *One Direction* and *Little Mix* want advice on how to make sure they are still being invited back to the Royal Variety Performance in 30 years time, they could always ask Elton John, who is also on the bill. Speaking of music survivors, there's also a rare appearance from Jeff Lynne's *ELO*. Other music stars

include pop princess and honorary national treasure *Kylie Minogue*, alongside *Ricky Martin*, the *Corrs*, *The Killers* frontman *Brandon Flowers*, *Josh Groban* and American country singer *Kacey Musgraves*. If you prefer your songs with added jazz hands, there'll also be show tunes from the cast of *Disney* and *Cameron Mackintosh's* multi-award winning musical *Mary Poppins*, and British soul sensation *Beverly Knight* performs a number from the record-breaking musical *Cats*. There's comedy from *Chris Ramsey*, *Romesh Ranganathan* and *Matt Forde*, who provides a political round-up of the year (although given that the show was actually recorded on November 13, there may be some recent events missing). *Cirque Du Soleil* provide an spectacular acrobatic act, the cast of *Oliver Award 2015* winners *The Play That Goes Wrong* will be hoping everything goes right, and, in what is becoming a new Royal Variety tradition, there's also an appearance by this year's *Britain's Got Talent* victors, *Jules, Matisse and Friends*.



The Royal Variety Performance 2015, Tuesday, ITV, 7.30pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Las Vegas with Trevor McDonald
ITV, 9pm
According to the popular slogan 'what Happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas'. That might work for tourists who are visiting for a wild weekend, but what about the people who actually live and work there? Trevor McDonald is about to find out as he looks beyond the casinos and bright lights to learn the truth about life in *Las Vegas*. Among the people he meets is a former high-class call girl, who at the height of her career was earning \$2million a year, and now runs a safe house for prostitutes who are trying to escape the clutches of violent pimps. Meanwhile bail bondsman Jon talks about his dangerous line of work, and the temptations of all those casino. Trevor also meets one of the city's most famous residents, former World Heavyweight Champion Mike Tyson, who discusses his experiences of winning and losing big, and reveals why he's now unlikely to be found on the city's famous Strip.

TUESDAY
8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown Christmas Special
Channel 4, 9pm
Jimmy Carr hosts a festive edition of the comedy panel show's version of the popular and long-

running words-and-numbers quiz. Regular team captains Sean Lock and Jon Richardson are joined by guests Johnny Vegas and Katherine Ryan to provide more comic innuendos, festive surprises and laughs aplenty. *Countdown's* resident lexicographer Susie Dent takes her usual place in Dictionary Corner with David O'Doherty, while mathematics whizz Rachel Riley is on hand to provide the letters and numbers.

WEDNESDAY
Prey
ITV, 9pm
Last year, this crime drama debuted with an engrossing story starring John Simm as a detective on the run after being framed for his wife's murder. Now it's his Life On Mars co-star Philip Glenister who takes the lead, playing prison officer David Murdoch. While escorting a female prisoner to hospital, his life spirals out of control. David receives a mysterious phone call in which the life of his heavily pregnant daughter is threatened, and must find a way to protect her – even if it

means putting his own existence in jeopardy. Meanwhile, DS Susan Reinhardt is charged with finding him – and working out why David is acting so out of character. *Rosie Cavaliero*, *Sammy Winward* and *MyAnna Buring* co-star.

THURSDAY
BBC Music Awards
BBC1, 8pm
Chris Evans and Fearnie Cotton host the second BBC Music Awards, live from Birmingham's Genting Arena, celebrating a year of musical achievement. Performers include *One Direction*, *Ellie Goulding*, *Jess Glynne*, *Little Mix*, *Hozier*, *Mumford & Sons* and *Omi*. Artist-producer Jack Garratt is crowned BBC Introducing Artist of the Year and throughout the evening, four other awards will be presented.



BBC Music Awards, Thursday, BBC1, 8pm

FRIDAY
Citizen Khan
BBC1, 8.30pm
Mr Khan enters the Great Sparkhill Bake Off, intent on scooping top honours with his version of the lemon drizzle inside-out cake. Meanwhile, storm clouds gather on the domestic front as Mrs Khan worries that Alia's new boyfriend sounds too rough and needs a good talking to - roping her husband and son-in-law Amjad in to do her bidding. She also makes a discovery that forces Mr Khan to quiz Alia about every father's worst nightmare.

Piers Morgan's Life Stories
ITV, 9pm
Timothy West joins the host to look back on a five-decade career as one of Britain's best-loved actors. The former *EastEnders* star speaks candidly about his 52-year marriage to Fawcett Towers actress Prunella Scales, and the impact of her battle with dementia on their lives. He also reveals the trauma of his first wife's mental health problems, and how he finally made peace with his daughter after several years of estrangement. On a lighter note, Timothy also reflects on his role at the wedding of Prince Charles and Camilla Parker-Bowles, and the time he toured the set of *Coronation Street* – disguised as former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev.

CHRONICLE

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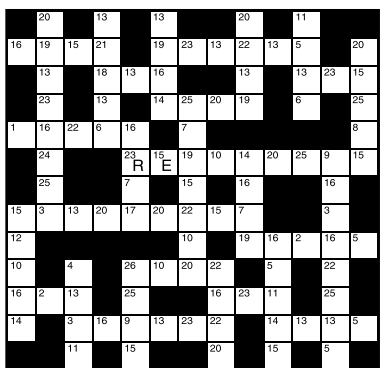
theloftstairscompany

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Freephone 0800 389 1281
or mobile friendly 01743 761499

BRAIN GYM No.354

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

K	U	W	V	X	R	C	Q	D	O	I	G	F
B	P	M	E	L	S	Z	A	N	J	T	H	Y

1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

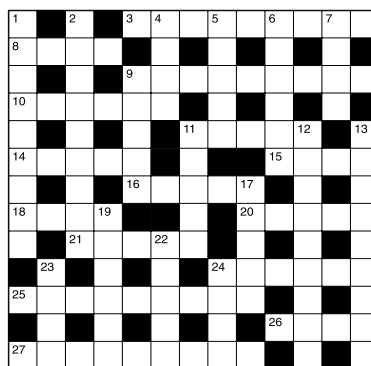
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Guidance provided by the board? (9)
- Breed that may be rare (4)
- It had short popularity in the fashion-world! (4-5)
- Emotion shown by love in little ways (6)
- In a way age is some protection (5)
- They join the course (5)
- Out of gear! (4)
- Kind of support a painter may need (5)
- Puts out a seat and has a meal (4)
- What could be finer to imply? (5)
- Noted thing to climb (5)
- More than a capital district (6)
- Diagrammatic form of catechism (9)
- A whole chapter may be devoted to him (4)
- Agreed on a fresh kind of drink (9)

Down

- Screw-driver (9)
- They may click at dances (9)
- Is first and last a goddess (4)
- Pick the literary section (5)
- Dupe to act as an usher (4,2)
- Involved in a row, Rosa is upset (4)
- Small creature with nothing to think about (5)
- Set sail on Eastern passage (5)
- Presumably he looks forward to getting on the board (4-5)
- The object wasn't far from causing an accident (4,5)
- Flower I ring up about (5)
- Hide or show (6)
- Set out for a holiday (5)
- Not a sign of a fatal wound! (4)
- This paper has a youthful following (4)



Quick Clues:

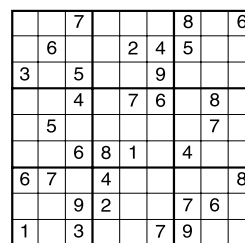
Across

- Theorise (9)
- Leave out (4)
- Burial (9)
- Steps (6)
- Drift (5)
- Mar (5)
- Period (4)
- Indiscretion (5)
- Repair (4)
- Scoundrel (5)
- Postpone (5)
- Impressive (6)
- Digger (9)
- Incline (4)
- Assuredness (9)

Down

- Odious (9)
- Narrow-minded (9)
- Writes (4)
- Unobstructed (5)
- Dirge (6)
- Melody (4)
- Pastoral poem (5)
- Come to point (5)
- Camouflaged (9)
- Cleansing (9)
- Mistake (5)
- Go away (6)
- Decree (5)
- Spindle (4)
- Humour (4)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

2	8	9	4	1	3	6	5	7
7	4	1	5	8	9	2	8	3
5	3	6	7	8	2	4	1	9
3	1	5	6	9	7	8	2	4
4	6	2	8	3	5	7	9	1
9	7	8	1	2	4	3	6	5
8	5	4	2	7	1	9	3	6
1	2	3	9	4	6	5	7	8
6	9	7	3	5	8	1	4	2

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Dock; 3 Remember; 8 Cole; 9 Speaking; 11 Baby-carriage; 13 Landor; 14 Strain; 17 Call for order; 20 Adroitly; 21 Stop; 22 Treasure; 23 Arid. Down: 1 Duckbill; 2 Galban; 4 Export; 5 Emaciation; 6 Being; 7 Rags; 10 School ties; 12 Intrepid; 15 Auditor; 16 Bowler; 18 Agree; 19 Part. QUICK - Across: 1 Cede; 3 Precious; 8 Ness; 9 Spinster; 11 Exasperation; 13 Spread; 14 Starve; 17 Indisputable; 20 Combined; 21 Tell; 22 Endanger; 23 Type. Down: 1 Converse; 2 Despair; 4 Report; 5 Constitute; 6 Outdo; 7 Sure; 10 Apparition; 12 Revellie; 15 Robbery; 16 Sphere; 18 Nomad; 19 Acme.

Quiz

- The flag of which American state bears the legend 'December 7, 1787'?
- In which year did Jamaica become independent?
- What was the middle name of inventor Thomas Edison?
- What does the French expression 'hors de combat' mean?
- Which country did Margaret, Maid of Norway, rule between 1286 and 1290?
- Who was the first Democrat American president?
- In the Bible, who was the wife of Ahab?
- What nationality is author Ngugi wa Thiong'o?
- Which bird's Latin name is Passer domesticus?
- In which year of the 1970s was the Suez Canal reopened?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 A variety of fennel; 2 Hamilton; 3 International Bank for Reconstruction and Development; 4 Sewing machine; 5 Danzig; 6 Dutch (koolsa); 7 A vent in or near a volcano; 8 Walter Gropius; 9 1975; 10 Toronto.

Niner: CONJUGATE

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

57828 gives cloth,
32192 gives more cloth,
64552 gives silk net.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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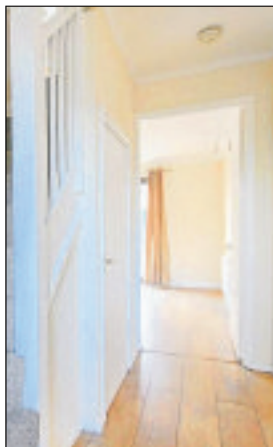
DRIVING EXPERIENCE - COST OF OWNERSHIP - DESIGN & BUILD - RANGE

> VIDEO REVIEWS > DEALERSHIP INFORMATION



expressandstar.com/drivetime

An impressive detached property with no chain



AN impressive detached property in Valleyside, Pelsall, Walsall lies at the head of a popular cul-de-sac.

It is for sale through Goodchilds at £250,000 with no chain.

It has four bedrooms, an entrance hall with stairs off and wooden flooring, a modern bathroom with a P-shaped bath, a lounge and a dining room.

It has a very appealing and spacious fitted kitchen with wooden flooring.

Outside is a garage and gardens. For further information contact Goodchilds on 01922 711444 or visit www.goodchilds-uk.com



HOMES AND FINANCIAL

66 Pool Hayes Lane, Willenhall, WV12 4PY



We are acting in the sale of the above property and received an offer of £150,500 on the above property. Any interested parties must submit any higher offers in writing to the selling agent before exchange of contracts takes place.

PUBLIC NOTICE

EPC Rating F

20 Bolton Road, Wednesfield, WV11 1UA



- Three Bedrooms
- Front Room
- Living Room
- Fitted Kitchen
- Family Bathroom
- First Floor W.C
- Gas Central Heating
- Double Glazing
- Rear Garden

Mid-Terraced House

£550PCM

4 Glaisdale Grove, Willenhall, WV13 1HB



- Three Bedrooms
- Lounge
- Dining Room
- Fitted Kitchen
- Family Bathroom
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating
- Driveway
- Enclosed Rear Garden

Semi-Detached House

£575 PCM

358 Wolverhampton Road, Walsall, WS2 8RJ



- Three Bedrooms
- Lounge
- Kitchen/Breakfast Bar
- Bathroom
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating
- Enclosed Rear Garden

Mid-Terraced House

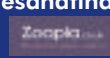
£475PCM



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ENTRIES NOW INVITED FOR OUR NEXT AUCTION

at Aston Villa Football Ground



145 Chepstow Road, Bloxwich
3 Bedroom Mid Terraced House
Guide: £48,000 - £54,000



48 Birchfield Way, Walsall
2 Bedroom Semi Detached House
Guide: £50,000 plus



52 Willingsworth Road, Wednesbury
3 Bedroom End Terraced House
Guide: £45,000 plus



10 Pinewood Close, Great Barr
3 Bedroom Semi Detached House
Guide: £69,000 - £74,000



9 York Avenue, Willenhall
3 Bedroom Semi Detached House
Guide: £48,000 - £52,000



14 Haskell Street, Walsall
3 Bedroom Residential Investment
Current Gross Income: £4,080 pa
Guide: £59,000 - £64,000

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W: cpbigwood.com

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*Please note charges may apply in addition to the purchase price on some lots *For a definition of Guide Price & Reserve price please refer to our catalogue or website

Chartered Surveyors



Estate Agents



EPC: D

LICHFIELD ROAD, RUSHALL

- Detached House
- Lounge, Dining Room
- Kitchen, Conservatory
- Downstairs Shower Room
- Five Bedrooms, Bathroom
- UPVC DG, GCH
- Driveway, Garage

£900pcm - plus fees



EPC: E

ST AUSTELL ROAD, WALSALL

- Detached House
- Three Bedrooms
- Lounge, Kitchen
- Bathroom
- UPVC DG, GCH
- Driveway, Garage

£790pcm - plus fees



EPC: E

GORSEY LANE, GREAT WYRLEY

- Semi-Detached House
- Three Bedrooms
- Two Reception Rooms
- Large Kitchen With Appliances
- Bathroom, GCH
- UPVC DG, Driveway

£575 pcm - plus fees



EPC: D

WATERFRONT WAY, WALSALL

- First Floor Apartment
- Two Bedrooms
- Lounge, Kitchen
- Bathroom
- Storage Heating, UPVC DG
- Underground Parking, Canal Views

£525pcm - plus fees



EPC: D

ROCKINGHAM CLOSE, BLOXWICH

- Ground Floor Maisonette
- Two Double Bedrooms
- Lounge & Kitchen
- Bathroom & DG
- Allocated Parking
- Economy 7 Heating

£425pcm - plus fees



EPC: E

MARY STREET, WALSALL

- Two Bed Terraced House
- Lounge & Dining Room
- Kitchen
- Bathroom
- GCH & Part DG
- Rear Garden

£395pcm - plus fees



EPC: D

CORPORATION STREET, WALSALL

- First Floor Flat
- Two Double Bedrooms
- Lounge, Dining Room
- Kitchen, Bathroom
- UPVC DG, GCH
- Parking At Rear

£375pcm - plus fees



EPC: D

HARDEN CLOSE, WALSALL

- Maisonette
- Lounge / Dining room
- Kitchen, Bathroom
- Two Bedrooms
- UPVC DG, GCH
- Garage

£425 pcm - plus fees



EPC: F

BORNEO STREET, WALSALL

- Terraced House
- Three Bedrooms
- Two Reception Rooms
- Kitchen With Hob & Oven
- Downstairs Bathroom
- GCH, Double Glazing

£595pcm - plus fees



EPC: D

BLOXWICH ROAD, WALSALL

- Mid-Terraced House
- Two Bedrooms
- Lounge, Dining Room
- Kitchen
- Downstairs Bathroom
- Garage To Rear

£495pcm - plus fees



EPC: D

COPPICE ROAD, WALSALL

- Two Bed End Terrace
- Lounge & Dining Room
- Kitchen & Bathroom
- GCH & UPVC DG
- Parking To Side
- Front & Rear Garden

£475pcm - plus fees



EPC: C

GREEN LANE, SHELFIELD

- Mid-Terraced House
- Two Reception Rooms
- Kitchen With Hob & Oven
- Two Bedrooms
- Bathroom
- UPVC DG, GCH

£500pcm - plus fees

An application fee of £200 inclusive of VAT is charged for upto two applications sharing the same property



www.fraser-wood.co.uk
15 Lichfield Street, Walsall



K. Stuart Swash

AUCTION TUESDAY 15th DECEMBER 2015

**WOLVERHAMPTON, 140 MERRIDALE ROAD**

Imposing Detached Residence
 "In & out" entrance drive, Porch, fine Reception Hall
 large through Lounge, Study / Sun Lounge, 21ft Dining Kitchen, Utility, fitted
 Cloakroom, Four Bedrooms, one en-suite, magnificent house Bathroom,
 33ft Garage, Rear Garden with gazebo. EPC: E.46

Guide: £270,000 / £290,000

VIEWING
 FRIDAY & SATURDAY, 4th & 5th DECEMBER @ 10.00 a.m.
 WOLVERHAMPTON

**130 THE LINDENS, NEWBRIDGE**

Easy access to City Centre
 Second Floor purpose built Flat
 Spacious accommodation with Double
 Glazing
 Private Hall, 14ft Lounge, Dining Kitchen,
 Two Double Bedrooms, Bathroom
 Garage. EPC: F.31

Guide: £48,000/£53,000

VIEWING
 FRIDAY & SATURDAY
 4th 5th DECEMBER @ 11.15 a.m.

**WOLVERHAMPTON
9 COALWAY GARDENS, MERRY HILL**

Pleasant residential cul-de-sac –
 Well appointed Detached Bungalow, Double Glazing and Central Heating
 Fully enclosed Porch, wide Entrance Hall, Lounge with patio doors to Garden,
 well appointed Kitchen, Rear Hall, Utility, Two Double Bedrooms, Bathroom,
 Garage, separate Workshop, attractive Gardens. EPC: D.61

Guide: £138,000 / £143,000

VIEWING:
 FRIDAY & SATURDAY, 4th & 5th DECEMBER @ 12.00 noon

**WOLVERHAMPTON
32A BIRCHWOOD ROAD, PENN**

First Floor Flat in a popular residential area
 Canopy Porch, impressive 14ft Lounge,
 Breakfast Kitchen, Pantry
 Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Garage and
 Garden. EPC: G.5

Guide: £50,000 / £55,000

VIEWING – Please Note: Access at rear via
 Ryecroft Avenue
 FRIDAY & SATURDAY,
 4th & 5th DECEMBER @ 11.00 a.m.

**WOLVERHAMPTON
71 OWEN ROAD,
PENN FIELDS**

Large Mid Terraced House with Gas Central
 Heating
 Enclosed Porch, Hall, Lounge, Dining Room,
 Store, Kitchen, Utility, GF Bathroom,
 Three Double Bedrooms. EPC: TBA
 Garden to rear

Guide: £53,000 / £58,000

VIEWING
 FRIDAY & SATURDAY,
 4th & 5th DECEMBER @ 10.30 a.m.

**WOLVERHAMPTON,
419 STAFFORD ROAD, OXLEY**

Investment Property
 Detached Bungalow, prominent position
 Spacious accommodation, Gas Central Heating
 Enclosed Porch, wide Hall, 20ft. Lounge, Din-
 ing Room, Two Verandahs, Kitchen, Store
 Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, 14ft. Loft Room
 Garage, off-road Parking, attractive Garden,
 EPC: TBA

Please Note: This property is offered subject to
 a Life Tenancy with no passing rental

Guide: £58,000 / £63,000

VIEWING
 FRIDAY 4th DECEMBER @ 2.30 p.m.

FOR SALE BY PUBLIC AUCTION

(subject to Conditions and prior sale)

**on TUESDAY 15th DECEMBER 2015
 @ 6.30 p.m.**

**at the Ramada Park Hall Hotel, Park Drive,
 Goldthorn Park, Wolverhampton, WV4 5AJ**

*Viewing of all lots at own risk**Please Register for Catalogue*

PLEASE NOTE: Viewings are at the times specified so, should you arrive late, you may find your viewing time is limited or that we have moved on in order to maintain the time schedule.

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Willenhall
01902 505971

Walsall
01922 460781

Bilston
01902 505974

Ravenscroft Road
Willenhall

NEW



This well maintained home benefits from UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and comprises of Reception Hall, Through Lounge Diner, Fitted Kitchen, Three Generous Bedrooms, Family Bathroom, Rear Gardens and Off Road Parking.

OFFERS AROUND: £127,500

Granville Street
Willenhall



Modern 2 bedroom end terraced house with driveway and garage (ideal for conversion), entrance hall, lounge, modern kitchen, downstairs wc, modern bathroom, double glazing and central heating, good size rear garden, call Paul Dubberley to view.

OFFERS AROUND: £125,000

Lichfield Road
Willenhall



Lovely traditional 3 bedroom semi detached home, lounge, dining room, kitchen, modern bathroom, central heating and double glazing, good size rear garden, no upward chain, call Paul Dubberley to view.

OFFERS AROUND: £125,000

Harvesters Road
Willenhall



NO UPWARD CHAIN 3 Bedroom semi detached house, entrance porch and hallway, kitchen/diner, lounge, downstairs wc, bathroom, double glazing and central heating (where specified), driveway and garage, front and rear gardens.

VIEWING ADVISED
OFFERS AROUND: £125,000

Bilston Lane
Willenhall



Ideal first time buy! Cracking 2 bedroom end terraced house, lounge, breakfast kitchen, downstairs wc, modern bathroom, central heating and double glazing, driveway, front and rear gardens, call Paul Dubberley to view.

OFFERS AROUND: £105,000

Ashtree Grove
Bilston

NEW



The spacious accommodation comprises lounge, dining room, kitchen with side verandah, three bedrooms, modern bathroom and rear garden. The property also benefits from gas central heating and double glazing.

OFFERS AROUND: £100,000

PUBLIC NOTICE



Upper Ettingshall Road
We are acting in the sale of the above property and have received an offer of £150,000. Any interested parties must submit any higher offers in writing to the selling agent before an exchange of contracts takes place

Pentire Close
Bilston

NEW



BRAND NEW HOME
- BR -
INTRODUCING GRITTLTON

OFFERS AROUND: £159,950

Moseley Road
Bilston



LOVELY Traditional 3 bedroom detached house, entrance porch and hallway, dining room, lounge/diner, kitchen, bathroom, driveway and garage, front and rear gardens, central heating and double glazing (where specified) call Paul Dubberley to view. EPC - D

OFFERS AROUND: £170,000

Lane Street
Bilston



Immaculate Detached Bungalow in a popular location close to all local amenities and transport links. Double Glazing & Gas Central Heating Briefly Comprising: Porch, Reception Hall, Lounge, Large Conservatory, Cottage Style Fitted Kitchen, Three Double Bedrooms, Modern Bathroom suite with separate Shower Cubicle, Off Road Parking to Front & Extensive Rear Garden with Vehicle Access. Must be Viewed to appreciate the

OFFERS AROUND: £180,000

Hallgreen Street
Bilston



INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY - Ibr -

This Spacious second floor flat offers a potential yield of around 11%. The property which is Gas central heated and UPVC double glazed throughout briefly comprises, Hallway, Lounge / Dining Room, Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, No Upward Chain.

OFFERS AROUND: £255,000

Merstone Close
Bilston

NEW



A One bedroom ground floor flat with a potential rental yield of 8.5% briefly comprising entrance hall, lounge, kitchen, bedroom, bathroom. No upward chain.

OFFERS AROUND: £60,000

Tameside Close
Willenhall



OFFERS OVER £63,000 3 Bedroom semi detached house available as a 50% shared ownership scheme, lounge, downstairs wc, modern kitchen/diner, modern bathroom, double glazing and central heating, driveway and rear garden, also available as 100% ownership call for details 01902 633323 Paul Dubberley Estate Agents.

OFFERS AROUND: £63,000

Pickwick Place
Bilston

NEW



A well presented 2 bedroom first floor flat. The property, which benefits UPVC double glazing, is located in a quiet cul-de-sac location. The property property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, 2 bedrooms, bathroom and enclosed rear garden. Communal parking is available with the dwelling.

OFFERS AROUND: £70,000

Compton Road
Wolverhampton



An immaculately presented 1 bedroom apartment ideally located on the fringes of Wolverhampton City Centre location.

Regency Mews is well situated near to the wide variety of local facilities that are available within easy walking distance at Chapel Ash, security gated parking and entrance, lounge open plan to kitchen, bedroom,

OFFERS AROUND: £70,000

Cresswell Crescent
Walsall



PUBLIC NOTICE - We are in receipt of an offer of £72,500 subject to contract for the above property. Anyone wishing to place a higher offer must do so before legal exchange of contracts

OFFERS AROUND: £74,950

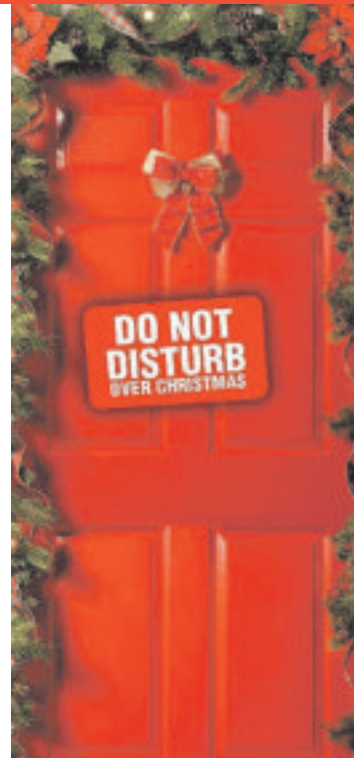
Thinking of selling your property in the New Year but don't want to be disturbed over Christmas? We may have the perfect solution for you...

If you are thinking of selling a property in the new year, now is the time to get started to take advantage of these selling secrets:

- There is a huge increase in online property searches between Christmas and the New Year as buyers are sat at home with time on their hands.
- Allows us time to sift through enquiries and present you with only the most suitable applicants for your property.
- Immediate viewings once you're ready in the New Year.
- Gives your property a head start against people who market their property in the New Year.
- Buyers looking over the winter are usually very genuine. Having your property ready to sell, fresh and newly listed in the new year will give you an advantage over other sellers.

Let us visit your home and prepare your property for sale now. We will advertise your property online over the busy Christmas period to maximise the spike in search activity, however we promise not to disturb you until our doors re-open in the new year, leaving you to relax and enjoy Christmas undisturbed.

Call your local Paul Dubberley branch now to arrange a free, no obligation market appraisal



Talke Road
Walsall

NEW



Good Size Semi Detached Residence with further potential for extensions (subject to planning permission) Requiring some modernisation, UPVC Double Glazed (where specified) and Gas Central Heating and Offering No Upward Chain the property briefly comprises: Porch, Reception Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, Utility Room, 2 Bedrooms, Bathroom, Paved Fore Garden, Driveway Garage and Rear Garden

OFFERS AROUND: £95,000

Webb Street
Bilston



Refurbished Semi Detached Residence with No Upward Chain, close to all local amenities and transports link. UPVC Double Glazing & Gas Central Heating briefly comprising: Porch, Reception Hall, Guest WC, Through Lounge, Re Fitted Kitchen, 3 Bedrooms, Re Fitted Shower Room, Front Driveway, Garage & Enclosed Rear Garden.

OFFERS AROUND: £95,000

Newbolt Road
Bilston



Middle Terrace Residence in a popular location within walking distance to town centre. UPVC Double Glazed & Gas Central Heating Briefly Comprising: Reception Hall, Lounge, Breakfast Kitchen, Guest WC, Three Bedrooms, Re fitted Bathroom, Front & Rear Gardens.

OFFERS AROUND: £90,000

Ashley Street
Bilston

NEW



A Two bedroom mid terraced house situated just off Mount Pleasant benefits from being located a short walk away from the Bilston Town centre briefly comprises, lounge, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, two bedrooms, gas central heating, double glazing and rear garden.

OFFERS AROUND: £82,950



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Birmingham & Black Country

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Auction

Thursday 10th
December 2015
at 6.00pm Precisely

Banks's Stadium, Walsall
Football Club, Bescot
Crescent, Walsall, WS1 4SA

LOT 1 **Chepstow Road** **Walsall**

Viewings: 3rd December 11am



End of terrace property in need of complete modernisation and improvement making an ideal purchase for builder or investor. Situated in a popular residential area within easy access of Bloxwich Town Centre the property has pleasing front aspect and comprises: Fully Enclosed Porch, Lounge, Kitchen, Utility Area, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Fore and Rear Garden.

●Guide Price £45,000 - £55,000

LOT 2 **Ryle Street** **Walsall**

Viewings: 3rd December 11.30am



Traditionally styled three bedroom semi detached property situated in a popular residential area just off Field Road. Ideally suited to an investor or builder. Bloxwich town centre is close by with all amenities. Set back from the road behind a small fore garden the property comprises:- Reception Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, Stone Cupboard, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Fore and Rear Gardens.

●Guide Price £40,000 - £50,000

LOT 4 **Hall Lane** **Coseley**

Viewings: 5th December 12.30 pm



The former Horse and Jockey Inn dating back to the 1850's, full of character now arranged as a generous three/four bedroom cottage positioned by way of a service road off Hall Lane and in walking distance to the local amenities of Hurst Hill. Sitting on a generous size plot and also having a detached garage, off-road parking, a further detached building to rear suitable for storage/workshop/annex area, and extensive gardens. Internal accommodation is in need of modernisation but offers tremendous potential for a buyer to carry out works to their own design and taste or even to convert to two self contained flats for investment purposes (subject to planning).

●Guide Price £150,000 PLUS

LOT 5 **Former Electrical Sub Station, Belchers Lane** **Birmingham, B9 5RY**

Viewings: 7th December 12:15



This two storey brick built former sub station building offers itself to a variety of uses (not residential) subject to the necessary planning and building regulation approval. Situated not far from the corner of Belchers Lane and Caldwell Road, the property offers over 2000 square feet of storage area arranged over two floors. Set back from the road there is a small parking area. Buyers Premium: A Buyers Premium of £900.00 (inclusive of V.A.T.) will be charged.

● Guide Price £10,000 - £20,000

LOT 6 **Lichfield Street** **Walsall**

By appointment through Auctioneers



This commercial property with three floors of office space is situated a short walk from Walsall town centre. This property has been very well maintained, with all amenities close at hand the property comprises: Ground Floor: Front door leads to entrance hallway, to the left is the front reception room, with access to cellar. Second reception room with under stair cupboard and door leading to Downstairs W.C. and Side access door with leads to side alley. Third Reception Room with access to Downstairs W.C. Rear Reception with two windows to rear and access door to side alley. First Floor: Stairs lead to landing with access to First Floor W.C., door leading to Kitchen and a second first floor W.C. Another door leading to Hallway with access to First Floor

●Guide Price £120,000 PLUS

LOT 7 **Alvechurch Road** **Northfield**

Viewings: 8th December 3pm



Traditionally styled extended semi detached property in need of modernisation and improvement. Set back from the road on a service road, the property is situated in a popular residential area with all amenities close at hand and offers tremendous scope for improvement. With a small fore garden, the property comprises: Ground Floor Reception Hall with stairs to first floor off, Dining Room, Lounge, Extended Kitchen First Floor: Bedroom One, Bedroom Two, Bedroom Three, Bathroom Outside: Fore and Rear Gardens

●Guide Price £100,000 PLUS

LOT 7a **Bean Croft** **Birmingham**

Viewings: Monday 7th December 11am



This one bedroom flat is in need of complete modernisation and improvement. The property is situated in a popular residential location and a short walk from Woodgate Valley Country Park. With all amenities close at hand the property comprises: First Floor Front door gives access to a small utility and Lounge (6.3m x 2.97m). Kitchen (2.7m x 1.7m), Bathroom (1.8m x 1.7m), Bedroom (4.8m x 2.7m).

●Guide Price £35,000 PLUS

LOT 8 **Church Close, Old Hall Lane** **Fradley**

Viewings: The site is open for viewing



This Freehold building plot has Planning Permission (subject to conditions). Application Number: 14/00470/FUL. Lichfield District Council (Lichfield.gov.uk) for the erection of a four bedroom detached dwelling. The plot is situated in the popular village of Fradley, just off the A38 and has views to the village church to the front. Surrounding properties are of a substantial nature and the plot offers an ideal opportunity for a developer or individual with the aspirations of a self build in a delightful spot.

●Guide Price £165,000 PLUS

LOT 10 **Former electric sub station building, Bakers Lane Aldridge,**

Viewings: 2nd December 11am



Former electric sub station building of brick with tiled roof. This rare opportunity presents itself with options for conversion to commercial use or demolition to create car parking facility. In the heart of Aldridge Village (Subject to Planning) Buyers Premium: A Buyers Premium of £900.00 (inclusive of V.A.T.) will be charged.

●Guide Price £10,000 - £20,000

LOT 10a **Claremont Place, Brookfield Road** **Birmingham**

By appointment through auctioneers



Traditionally styled end of terrace property with part double glazing and central heating, situated in a popular residential area close to Birmingham City Centre and would make an ideal purchase for an investor. Set back behind a lawned fore garden, the property comprises:- Ground Floor Lounge with double glazed window to front, inner lobby with access to Kitchen/Diner with range of base and wall units and central heating boiler. First Floor Bedroom One (front), Bedroom Two (rear), Bathroom with matching suite. Outside: Fore and Rear Gardens

●Guide Price £70,000 Plus

LOT 11 **Oakland Road** **Walsall**

Viewings: Thursday 3rd December 12.00



In need of complete modernisation and improvement this traditionally styled semi detached property is conveniently located close to all amenities and would make an ideal purchase for investor or builder. Set back from the road behind a fore garden, the property comprises:- Lounge, Kitchen, Bathroom, Three Bedrooms, Fore and Rear Garden.

●Guide Price £35,000 - £45,000

LOT 12 **Walker Road** **Walsall**

Viewings: Thursday 3rd December 12:30



This traditionally styled gas centrally heated and double glazed semi detached property would make an ideal purchase for an investor. Set back from the road behind a good sized garden and driveway affording off street parking, the property is conveniently located for all amenities and requires a small amount of upgrade. Ground Floor Enclosed Porch, Reception Hall, Lounge, Kitchen with range of units, wall mounted Baxi central heating boiler, Lobby with access to w.c. and door to side Verandah First Floor Staircase leads to landing providing access to Bedroom One (front), Bedroom Two (rear), Bathroom with white suite, panelled bath, pedestal wash hand basin, low level w.c. Outside: Fore Garden with off street parking, Rear Garden.

●Guide Price £65,000 PLUS

LOT 12a **Dawson Street** **Walsall**

Viewings: 3rd December 1pm



This three bedroom terraced property is in need of modernisation and improvement making an ideal purchase for builder or investor. Situated in a popular residential location and with all amenities close at hand the property comprises: Ground Floor Porch (1.8m x 1m) leading to front reception room (4.1m x 4.1m), Kitchen (4.1m x 2.3m) with access to rear door, downstairs W.C. and under stair cupboard. First Floor Stairs lead to landing giving access to Bedroom one (Rear 2.7m x 2.3m), Bedroom two (Rear 3.4m x 2.5m), Bedroom Three (Front 3.35m x 3m) and Bathroom (3m x 2.4m)

●Guide Price £55,000 - £65,000

LOT 13 **Greystoke Avenue** **Hodge Hill**

Viewings: 2nd December 2:30pm,



Situated in a quiet cul-de-sac in the popular Hodge Hill area of Birmingham with all amenities close at hand and easy access to the motorway network, this traditionally styled semi detached property is in need of slight improvement but offers an ideal opportunity for homeowner or investor. Ground Floor: Enclosed Porch, Reception Hall with cupboard, Open Plan Lounge/Dining Room Lounge with bay window to front, Dining Room, Fitted Kitchen with door to garage. First Floor: Landing providing access to Bedroom One (rear), Bedroom Two (front), Bedroom Three (front), Bathroom with corner bath, shower and wash hand basin, Separate W.C. Outside: Driveway with off street parking leads to Garage, Enclosed Rear Garden (in need of attention) with school playing fields beyond. Buyers Premium A Buyers Premium of £900.00 (inclusive of V.A.T.) will be charged.

●Guide Price £115,000 - £125,000

LOT 14 **Wood Lane** **Pelsall**

Viewings: Thursday 3rd December 1pm



This well maintained, traditional, semi-detached property occupying a generous plot in this popular residential location benefits from gas central heating and uPVC double glazing. With all amenities close at hand the property comprises: Ground Floor: Porch, Reception Hall, Attractive Lounge which has uPVC double glazed square bay window to the front, double radiator, feature fireplace with marble surround and hearth housing living flame gas fire, television aerial point and coving to ceiling. Separate Dining Room with uPVC double glazed patio doors out to the rear, feature fireplace with living flame effect electric fire and coving to the ceiling. Fitted Kitchen has uPVC double glazed picture window to the side and useful under stair storage cupboard, and Utility. First Floor: Master Bedroom which has uPVC double glazed picture window to the front. Bedroom Two with uPVC double glazed picture window to the rear and radiator. Bedroom Three with uPVC double glazed picture window to the front; as well as the Bathroom.

●Guide Price £110,000 PLUS

LOT 15 **Sandringham Road,** **Perry Barr**

Viewings: 4th December 3:30pm



This well maintained three bedroom semi detached property is situated in a popular residential area within Perry Barr. With gas central heating and double glazing already fitted this property would make an ideal purchase for a home owner. Ground Floor: Recessed Porch, Reception Hall, Living Room, Refitted Kitchen, Side Verandah. First Floor Bedroom One, Bedroom Two, Bedroom Three and Bathroom. Outside: There is a block paved fore garden. To the rear there is a good sized garden which is private and enclosed, it also includes a decked area.

●Guide Price £110,000 Plus

●Guides are provided as an indication of each seller's minimum expectation. They are not necessarily figures which a property will sell for and may change at any time prior to the auction. Each property will be offered subject to a Reserve (a figure below which the Auctioneer cannot sell the property during the auction) which we expect will be set within the Guide Range or no more than 10% above a single figure Guide



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Shepwell Green Willenhall



Offer around £67,500

A two bedroom second floor flat having the benefit of UPVC double glazing, central heating and no upward chain. Ideal for landlord (previously let out for £480pcm) or first time buyer this well presented property further comprises, reception hall, lounge, study/store, fitted kitchen, 2 x double bedrooms, bathroom, shower room, parking space and garage. Energy rating E.

Slaney Court Walsall



Offers around £59,950

A first floor two bedroom flat having the benefit of gas central heating, UPVC double glazing and no upward chain. The property further comprises, reception hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, two double bedrooms, family bathroom, communal gardens and parking and garage in block. Energy rating D.

Bentley Lane Walsall



Offers around £64,995

A two bedroom middle terrace family home having the benefit of some UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. The property further comprises, lounge/diner, fitted kitchen, ground floor family bathroom, 2 x double bedrooms, front and rear gardens. Energy rating E.

Walker Road Bloxwich



Offers around £65,000

A two bedroom modern first floor apartment ideal for Landlord or first time buyer whilst having the benefit of no upward chain, gas central heating and UPVC double glazing. The property further comprises, reception hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, two bedrooms, family bathroom and parking space. Energy rating C.

Mount Street Caldmore



Offers around £104,995

A well presented two bedroom semi detached home in a popular location. The property briefly comprises of a lounge, kitchen/diner, two bedrooms and family bathroom. The property also benefits from no upward chain, central heating, double glazing, front and rear gardens and off road parking. Energy rating E.

Lincoln Road Walsall



Offers around £95,000

A very well presented two bedroom end of terrace family home having the benefit of UPVC double glazing, gas central heating. This lovely property further comprises, reception hall, spacious open plan through lounge/diner, fitted breakfast kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, good size family bathroom and rear garden. Energy rating E.

Falcondale Road Willenhall



Offers around £130,000

Offers are invited on this lovely two bedroom semi detached property having the benefit of UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and fitted intruder alarm. Located in the sought after 'Sneyd Park' estate the property further comprises, porch, lounge, fitted kitchen/diner, conservatory, two double bedrooms, family bathroom, front and rear gardens, detached garage and off road parking for several vehicles. Awaiting energy rating

Oxford Place Merton Way



Offers around £77,000

●●●IDEAL FOR LANDLORD AS CURRENTLY LET OUT FOR £475PCM●●● A superb two bedroom second floor modern apartment having the benefit of UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. This lovely apartment further comprises, reception hall, lounge, fitted modern kitchen with integrated appliances, two bedrooms (master with en suite shower room), family bathroom with shower from taps and allocated parking. Energy rating C.

The Hayes Willenhall



Offers around £145,000

A two bedroom semi-detached bungalow having the benefit of no upward chain, UPVC double glazing and gas central heating. The property further comprises, reception hall, lounge, refitted kitchen, garage, two bedrooms, family bathroom, good sized attractive rear garden and off road parking to the front. Energy rating D.

Aldis Road Walsall



Offers around £110,000

A recently refurbished two bedroom semi detached property having the benefit of UPVC double glazing and gas central heating and no upward chain. This lovely property further comprises, reception hall, through lounge, fitted kitchen, two double bedrooms, family bathroom and front and rear garden. Energy rating D.

Elbow Street Cradley Heath



Offers around £84,500

Redstones are delighted to present to market this stunning refurbished two bedroom apartment, located within walking distance of Cradley Heath with a host of shops, schools, restaurants and bars. It is serviced with excellent public transport by both bus and train. Accommodation comprises of entrance hallway, reception room, kitchen, two double bedrooms and a bathroom. The property also benefits from private parking and communal gardens. Viewing is highly recommended!!!! Energy rating C.

Bowling Green Close Darlaston



Offers around £90,000

A recently refurbished three bedroom middle terrace family home having the benefit of UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. Recently redecorated and re-carpeted this lovely family home further comprises reception hall, guest W.C., lounge, fitted kitchen diner, three bedrooms, family bathroom and front and rear gardens. Energy rating D.

Bloxwich Road Walsall



Offers around £105,000

A fully refurbished and upgraded three bedroom middle terrace having the benefit of fresh decoration, new carpets, UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. This well presented family home further comprises lounge, dining room, re-fitted kitchen with built in oven and hob, re-fitted ground floor bathroom, three bedrooms, Refitted W.C. (on first floor) and rear garden. Energy rating E.

Cope Street Walsall



Offers around £90,000

A very well presented, improved and upgraded 2/3 bedroom middle terrace family home having the benefit of majority UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. The well maintained family home further comprises, lounge, dining room, refitted kitchen, ground floor refitted bathroom, 3 bedrooms (3rd bedroom accessed through bedroom one) and attractive rear garden. Energy rating D.

Mistletoe Drive Tamebridge



Offers around £110,000

A two bedroom end of terrace family home having the benefit of double glazing and gas central heating. Located in a sort after estate in a quiet cul-de-sac the property further comprises reception hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, two double bedrooms, family bathroom, front and rear gardens and two parking spaces. Energy rating D.

Blackbrook Way Wolverhampton



Offers around £179,995

A three bedroom detached family home in a pleasant cul-de-sac location having the benefit of UPVC double glazing, warm air central heating, no upward chain and fitted intruder alarm. This lovely family home further comprises porch, reception hall, lounge, fitted kitchen diner, three bedrooms, family bathroom, rear garden with verandah, block paved driveway and garage. Awaiting energy rating

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Light, handy and fun ride

By John Griffiths

Modern, sculpted good looks apart, there's not too many surprises in the package that makes up Honda's new middleweight contender in the roadster class, the CB650F.

But it's nevertheless an excellent, value-for-money machine at £6,399 which is likely to attract admiring glances in the bikers' cafe car park and provide lots of fun on the road.

Honda's previous middleweights, the CBF600 and the Hornet 600, were based on the running gear of the company's CBR sports machine but with the engine retuned to produce more usable power in the low to middle areas of the rev range.

The new CB650, with 86bhp on tap, gets the same treatment. It sits neatly between its two predecessors in terms of outright power with a theoretical top speed of 130mph (theoretical except on the track, that is).

It's particularly well balanced so that it feels lighter than its 208kgs suggests.

While its lighter than some of its four cylinder rivals, it's slimmer too and comes with a reasonable 810mm seat height, factors which combine to make it feel particularly agile around town as well as on the open road.

The electronic fuel injection provides for smooth, progressive and controllable power delivery through the slick, six-speed gearbox.

While the maximum horses are unleashed at 11,000rpm, the engine remap

means peak torque is available a lot lower down – about 8,000rpm. Indeed, you don't even need that big a twist of the right wrist – at anything above 4,000rpm in almost any gear the CB650 leaps forward to make the most of overtaking opportunities. Such a wide power band makes it very rideable in everyday road conditions.

Once on the move, the CB650 is a bit of a revelation. I've ridden dedicated sports bikes which feel heavier and slower to change direction as you flick left and right through the twisty bits.

It's pretty much effortless, and comfortable too as the bars are set wide and high for a pleasant, upright riding position which reduces strain on the neck and back.

Comfortable

The twin seat is well-shaped and comfortable, and you get grab handles for a pillion passenger as well as luggage hooks.

At motorway speeds there is surprisingly little buffeting for a naked bike.

I do struggle with some of the intricacies of aerodynamics but it may be that the Honda engineers have it cracked with just a small, well-shaped 'pod' around the headlight to deflect the wind.

It was certainly a contrast to another 'naked' bike I had ridden only the day before, where 20 miles along a motorway left me feeling wind battered and with aching arms. This had only a big round headlight to bash its way through the air.

Behind the headlight pod is the new electronic instrument cluster: a large and clear digital speedo in the centre of an analogue tachometer on the left, with fuel gauge, clock, trip and warning lights on the right.

The brakes are well up to the task, with



Excellent, value-for-money machine at £6,399 which is likely to attract admiring glances.

twin 320mm 'wavy' discs at the front and 240mm disc at the rear. The lever action is nicely progressive with plenty of 'feel'.

With a 17.3 litre fuel tank, you get adequate range with an estimated average consumption of between 45 and 50mpg, depending on conditions (and, of course, how you ride).

The 17-inch cast aluminium wheels are shod with 120/70 rubber at the front,

and 180/55 at the rear. The CB650F has aggressive, 'streetfighter' looks which to some extent disguise the fact that it's rather benign and easy to ride, with plenty of performance to satisfy most riders' requirements in this category.

Light and handy for manoeuvring around town, it's also more fun than you might expect from a 650 on winding A and B roads.

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Delivering luxury of time

By James Parker

Volvo Cars' ongoing research into autonomous driving has confirmed what we all know – that the daily commute is taking the joy out of driving. It is during the commute and on long motorway trips that people are most willing to delegate the act of driving to their car.

With this in mind, Volvo has developed Concept 26, named to reflect the average daily commute to work of 26 minutes* – time that could be spent doing something more meaningful than sitting in stop-start traffic. Volvo has set out to bring choice and freedom back to the driver; to enjoy the

driving experience when they want to, or to delegate driving to the car when they want to do something else.

"It's all about people. Our research clearly shows that some people will want to use their commuting time creatively when they have full autonomous drive available, while others will want to just sit back and relax, watch online media or listen to music. Autonomous drive will make all of this possible. This is what Concept 26 has captured by reimagining the entire car experience," said Robin Page, vice president of interior design at Volvo Cars.

Concept 26 is based around an all-new patented seat design that actively cradles the driver during the transformation phase into one of the three modes: Drive, Create or Relax. With these three modes the concept creates a new autonomous drive innovation platform that can adapt to new needs and technologies over time.

When the driver wishes to delegate driving to the car, the steering wheel retracts, the seat reclines and a large display emerges from the dashboard allowing the driver to enjoy the time spent in the car as they like. Concept 26 embraces the need for radical change of the basic design of car interiors and provides a space that can be used as the driver/passenger wishes.

Concept 26 opens up a new paradigm of possibilities in the car – from entertainment to service provision and beyond, using the technology that is now a natural part of our everyday lives. It also signals the huge potential for new business opportunities and high-tech collaborations that autonomous drive will bring.

"We have gone to great lengths to understand the challenges and opportunities that



.....
'We have gone to great lengths to understand the challenges and opportunities that autonomous cars will bring to people in coming years.'

autonomous cars will bring to people in coming years, and our flexible approach to engineering and design, enabled by our new Scalable Product Architecture, means that we can readily bring this from concept to reality," said Dr Peter Mertens, senior vice president research and development at Volvo Car Group.

Volvo Cars' ongoing Drive Me research project, which will see an extended fleet of fully autonomous cars driving real customers on the roads of Gothenburg, Sweden, in 2017 is further proof that Volvo is a leader

in autonomous drive technology, building firmly on its foundation of safety.

"Volvo Cars is among the first to address the subject of self-driving cars and liability. We firmly believe that car makers should take full responsibility for the actions of the car when it is driving in full autonomous mode. If a manufacturer does not accept liability, it clearly implies that they are not confident about their autonomous drive technology," said Dr Peter Mertens.

*Based on research of the average commute time in the United States



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*£2,000 Scrappage Allowance towards a new car is offered on condition that the traded-in car has been registered in your name as the owner for at least 90 days and the registration document is in your name and address. Offer available to private individuals and small businesses 1-24 units (purchase only). All other sales categories are excluded. Offer applies to selected new vehicles registered between 8 October 2015 and 15 December 2015. *Excludes VIVA, ADAM JAM, New Corsa Sting, New Corsa Sting R. Ts&Cs apply. Participating Retailers only. UK supplied vehicles only. #Official EU-regulated test data are provided for comparison purposes and actual performance will depend on driving style, road conditions and other non-technical factors. Correct at time of going to press.

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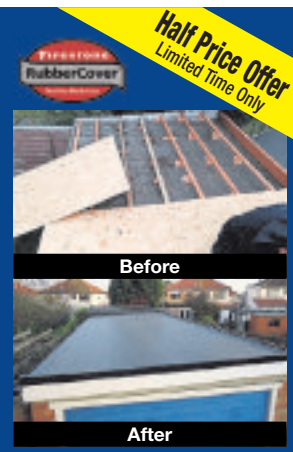
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9 Local Information

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a) the southbound carriageway of the M6 between its junction with the exit slip road at Junction 10 and its junction with the link road leading from M6 Junction 8; and

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The work will be carried out over night between 23:00 hours and 05:00 hours and is expected to start on Monday 14 December 2015, and continue for 5 nights. The Order will come into force on 7 December 2015.

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For further information please contact Mark Simmonite on 0121 678 8422.

Karen Eustace, an Officer in Highways England Company Limited.

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DARREN, 44, slim build, dark brown hair, green eyes, seeks genuine female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418809 ☺

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Whittaker misses out on the medals

DARLASTON'S Benjamin Whittaker will miss out on a medal after going out of the European Youth Championships, writes *Craig Birch*.

The England captain was eliminated, on a hotly-disputed split decision, by Irish rival John Joyce after their quarter-final clash in Poland last Wednesday.

Victory would have guaranteed him, at least, bronze in what will be the 18-year-old's last involvement at youth level.

A keenly-contested bout with his Irish counterpart went the distance, with some doubt as to where the result was heading. In the end, Joyce had his hand raised.

Whittaker, who fights out of Wodensborough Boxing Club, will now take part in Team GB assessments next month before stepping up to the seniors in 2016.

He takes with him two national titles and silver from the Commonwealth Youth Games two months ago.

He'd scored two wins in the Euros before tumbling out, too, having removed his first opponent after a round on the opening day.

His rival from Belarus, Petar Nasic, retired at the end of the first session hurt in the corner, after being put down twice in swift order.

Whittaker's right hand proved a menace and bowled over Nasic on a couple of occasions, blows even the brief respite of the bell couldn't save him from.

He then outclassed Italy's Giovanni Sarchioto on day two, comfortably winning all of the three rounds in a unanimous points victory.

Kenny denies approach to take QPR job

WOLVES boss Kenny Jackett insists he hasn't been approached by QPR for their vacant manager's job.

Rumours are rife that the London club have launched a formal bid to prise Jackett from Wolves.

Rangers are said to have Jackett high on their shortlist to replace Chris Ramsey, who was sacked earlier this month.

Jackett, however, denied that QPR had contacted him – and committed his future to Wolves.

The 53-year-old has close ties to London and spent three years at Loftus Road as assistant to Ian Holloway from 2001 to 2004. Jackett said of the speculation: "It's not my position to talk about others clubs. But there hasn't been any approach to myself, or as far as I'm aware, the club, so there's nothing to say on it."

"It's not something that's come to me. I'm committed to Wolves and speculation is just that, speculation."

The head coach is under increasing pressure at Molineux.

Dean uses his head to hand Villa the win

Pelsall 2 Atherstone 1

DEAN Williams headed a winning goal for Pelsall Villa as they moved up to 11th in Midland League Division One with a 2-1 home success over Atherstone Town.

Pelsall Villa started brightly Ryan Ward having a shot in the first few minutes.

The visitors took the lead on 20 minutes when Pelsall failed to clear a corner and the ball fell to Luke Tyler whose low shot flew into the net through a forest of legs.

Pelsall equalised two minutes after the break when Ahkeen Rose beat the advancing keeper.

Ten minutes from time came what proved to be the winning goal when Callum Phillips' pinpoint cross found Dean Williams who headed home under pressure.

Tough opponents shut out Blox

Bromsgrove 5 Bloxwich Mens 1sts 0

HIGH-FLYING Bloxwich faced their toughest opponents of the season at Bromsgrove School on a miserable, grey Saturday afternoon.

Bloxwich were outplayed and struggled to get any momentum going against a strong and well-organised Bromsgrove side who played to a far higher standard than their league position would suggest.

Things did not start well for Bloxwich with goalkeeper Mark Azram losing a vital piece of goalkeeping kit, his left hand pad, just before push back.

With a makeshift glove for the goalkeeper, Bloxwich started positively with Jake Perkins having a well-taken, if not slightly fortunate, goal being dis-

allowed early on in the match. Bloxwich had other chances that should have been taken but could not stop the quick counter attacks of Bromsgrove as they found their groove and took a three goal lead into half time.

Bloxwich made the game even tougher for themselves by going down to nine men for a period of the match with John Morris earning a yellow card for stopping with the back of his stick.

There was another yellow card for Mark Azram for sliding out for a tackle after another good counter attack from Bromsgrove.

Stand-in keeper, Jack Phillips, watched on pathetically as Bromsgrove scored the flick.

Things did not improve for Bloxwich in the second half conceding two more goals in a humbling defeat for the Barbarians.

News from the physio table also suggests that stalwart defender, John Morris, picked up a serious ankle injury and will be missing the final two games of 2015.

Everyone at Bloxwich, wishes Morris a speedy recovery and hope to see him back on the pitch in the new year.

Bloxwich face local rivals Walsall next week and hope to make huge improvements on their poor performance this weekend.

Wright snuffs out Wood's fight back

Walsall Wood 2 Long Eaton United 3 WOOD missed the chance to leap-frog AFC Wulfrunians and move up to seventh place.

Long Eaton closed the gap on Wood to just one point, with two games in hand, as they look to get their season back on track after a managerial change. Both sides initially lacked a cutting edge, but it was Wood who threatened first, on 10 minutes Corey Currihens crossing low, Shaun Rickford denying Joey Butlin a shot at goal at the expense of a corner.

From the flag kick a bit of a scramble developed and two close range shots were charged down before the ball was finally cleared.

United's first attack came with Josh Wright racing clear wide left and his ball into the box hit first time high over the bar by Grant Ryan.

No long after Utd went ahead, with Wright powering in from wide left, his near post cross was spilled by keeper Lee Evans, Brad Wells pouncing to score from close range.

From a free kick on halfway on 34 minutes the ball was half cleared to Piliero who hit a first time 30-yard effort too high.

Jarrold Westcarr was found on the right of the box, he cut inside, turned back outside a challenge to drill a low shot to make it 2-0.

Forcing

Four minutes into the second half a quickly taken right wing throw-in released Butlin into the box forcing keeper Scott Low to go full stretch to push away the goal-bound effort.

Wood kept up the pressure with the visitor's content to defend their lead, but it all changed on 72 minutes.

Grant Beckett laid a neat ball through to Max Black, his pinpoint through-ball releasing Griffiths into the left of the box to fire past the advancing keeper.

Wood kept up the pressure in search of the equaliser which duly arrived on 78 minutes, Deakin racing out of defence and playing the ball up to Butlin, his quick ball out right collected at pace by Griffiths to cross into the box, Black gleefully tucking away the equaliser.

Virtually from the restart United went back ahead.

Wood were caught out. Wells was strong to win the ball and quickly fed Piliero to his right. The skipper calmly crossed low into the box to find Wright and he got the goal his live wire performance deserved, scoring with a crisp low drive.

Wood tried to find a way back but they went down to their first defeat in November.

Kicks play key role in home defeat



Walsall's centre Richard Clarke takes on two defenders during the match against Whitchurch

Walsall 3 Whitchurch 14

THE visitors had the benefit of the wind and rain during the first half, but only had a 9-3 lead at the interval.

This was thanks to three 25 metre kicks by their full back.

Roger Weston reduced the deficit for Walsall with a kick.

The second half saw the only try of the game as Whitchurch

forced their way over from close range. The United had another pleasing win.

This time it was a 31-5 victory at Camp Hill. Laured Kalari led the scorers with a hatrick of tries.

Rob Angell and Richard Hodgess scored one each. Mitch Carless kicked three conversions.

The 3rd XV faced strong opposition at Lichfield. They produced a competitive performance

with late scores giving the hosts a 39-10 victory. Andy Payne and Andy Findley scored Walsall's two tries.

Walsall U-16s 32 Stoke U-16s 0
Tamworth U-15s 47
Walsall U-15s 12

Both teams produced an excellent game of rugby despite the dreadful conditions.

Wolves SC lock down Willenhall squad

Wolves SC FC 5 Willenhall Town 0

WOLVES Sporting Community made light work of Willenhall in this feisty local derby at Hazel Lane.

It could have been a lot worse but for poor finishing from the home side.

Sporting opened the scoring after 25 minutes with ex-Willenhall player and SC captain Jamal Fuller hitting a low drive after good work by Jon Letford with chances all falling to the home side it was a surprise that it was only 1-0 at half time.

The second half started in similar fashion as sporting started at a fast pace giving Willenhall no time on the ball and creating several good chances before the second goal duly arrived on 55 minutes when substitute Liam Cain scores a 25-yard free kick with his first touch.

The chances continued to come for SC and Willenhall had theirs as well with SC old boy Corey Pearce missing two half chances one a header and the other forcing a superb save from keeper Luke Stevens.

The third and killer goal was scored by Angelo Franco who shot from the edge of the area and found the bottom corner.

SC saved the best goals until late on with a superb lob from Dan Westwood and skipper fuller grabbing his second of the night with a bullet header to move sporting up to fifth place in the table.

At the half way stage of the season things are looking bright for the youngsters who only 12 months ago sat rock bottom of the league.

Burntwood take the Dog out with four

Lichfield & Walsall District Football League League Two

BURNTWOOD Town 4 Dog FC 0
Oak Park Rangers 2 Anchor FC 2
Queens Head FC 0 Walsall Phoenix 2

League Three

Bowling Green FC 1 Three Crowns Utd 1
Duke of Wellington 2 Burntwood Trident 2
Walsall Wheatsheaf 4 Scales FC 3

Under 21s

Pelsall Villa Colts UHU 0 Chasetown Sch.Reds 4
W'ton Sporting 4 Chasetown Sch. Blues 3

DFL League Trophy - Group B
Cannock Town 0 AFC Saddlers 1
Jack Donnelley Cup - Round Two
AFC Red Star 1 Eximius Warriors 2

Bowman FC 2 ASP Victoria 3
Burntwood Dragons 6 AFC Cat 4
aet & pen.

Dr Johnson 5 Boney Hay 2

Garde ready for change after defeat

REMI GARDE is contemplating changes in a bid to plug Aston Villa's leaky defence after a "painful" defeat at home to Watford.

Garde's reign as manager got off to a positive start with a clean sheet and a very creditable goalless draw at home to Manchester City at the beginning of the month.

But since the international break Villa have suffered successive defeats to Everton and Watford, conceding seven goals in the process.

Garde admitted it was "painful" viewing against the Hornets and was clearly frustrated by Alan Hutton's "silly" own goal midway through the second half which surrendered the initiative and presented Watford with a 2-1 lead.

"I have some possibilities so I will have a look," said Garde.

Saddlers suffer first away defeat

Swindon 2 Walsall 1

WALSALL lost on their travels for the first time in League One this season after slipping to a 2-1 defeat at Swindon.

A Jonathan Obika header in the first half put the hosts ahead before Tom Bradshaw levelled the tie shortly after the hour work.

But despite the Saddlers going on to dominate possession, Louis Thompson lashed home a 20-yard drive in the closing stages to steal the points for the Robins.

Boss Smith sprang a selection surprise in naming his starting XI with Jordan Cook and Anthony Forde preferred ahead of Milan Lalkovic and Kieron Morris.

It meant the Saddlers lined up in a 4-1-4-1 system with skipper Adam Chambers in a holding midfield role and Tom Bradshaw the lone striker.

Also included was George Evans who had his loan from Manchester City extended.

Swindon manager Martin Ling, a former Walsall scout, made two changes from the side that lost 5-1 at Fleetwood.

Despite having tasted victory in just four of their 18 games this season, Swindon started brightly but

Football

a lack of confidence meant they kept giving the ball away in promising positions.

But the home side did manage to break the deadlock in the 16th minute when Walsall lost possession cheaply in midfield.

After Bradley Barry forced a corner, a whipped ball was met in the air by Jordan Turnbull who saw his effort spectacularly saved by Neil Etheridge.

Unmarked

Louis Thompson sent it back into the danger area though and, with Walsall pushing out, an unmarked Jonathan Obika headed home.

The goal seemed to spur the Saddlers into life and they thought they should have had a penalty when Bradshaw took a Romaine Sawyers ball on the chest only to be bundled to the floor by Adam El-Abd.

Despite vigorous protests from both Bradshaw and Smith, referee Keith Hill waved play on.

Walsall were now on top and Sawyers and Bradshaw again combined with the Welshman hitting a low strike which Lawrence Vigouroux tipped

around the post. Buoyed, the visitors continued to press with Forde's free-kick, just past the half hour, teeing up Evans who saw his shot blocked.

Smith's side were getting into good positions in the final third but too often their decision making was letting them down.

And despite the rest of the half largely being in front of Swindon's goal, the Saddlers came off at the break a goal down having created little in the way of clear cut chances.

Following their half-time instructions, Walsall came flying out the blocks and twice came a whisker away from pulling level inside the first minute.

First Bradshaw latched on to a Sawyers through-ball and arrowed a drive towards the top corner which Vigouroux spectacularly pushed away.

As the clock ticked past the hour mark, Walsall did manage to pull level.

Bradshaw collected the ball midway in Swindon's half and darted towards goal before firing a low strike across the keeper and into the corner for his 11th goal of the campaign.

Smith's side were now having wave after wave of attack, but with just a few minutes remaining Swindon snatched all three points.



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Pics pick up the point with goalless draw

Rushall 0 Halesowen 0
HALESOWEN Town left Rushall Olympic with a point as they played out a goalless draw in the Evo-Stik Premier.

Luke Benbow introduced Halesowen's new keeper Shaun Rowley to the game early on when he forced him into a save low down.

Rowley was pleased to see the ball caught under Zak Martin's feet before he could shoot before veteran Asa Charlton produced two good tackles to deny Alex Reid.

Kris Taylor forced another save from Rowley, who was impressive in the first half as he also saved from Reid, Benbow and Jake Heath.

The visitors' best chance came when Jean Michel-Gueyes fired straight at Dean Coleman from close range before Rowley produced his best save so far – diving to his left to keep out Jack Duggan, who went close earlier on.

Reid tried to square for Heath early on in the second half but good defending from Aaron Griffiths prevented the midfielder from having a tap in.

Griffiths came close to breaking the deadlock as he curled a free-kick just wide of the target before Benbow shot wide at the other end.

The visitors almost won it late on when Michel-Gueyes drove at goal from 20 yards but Coleman produced the best save of the game to tip the ball onto the bar.

Rushall Olympic: Coleman, Christophorou, Wilkinson, Martin (Tolley 60), Duggan, Townsend, Heath, Palmer (Wright 60), Benbow (Lavelle-Moore 82), Taylor, Reid. Subs not used: Caines, Howell

Halesowen: Rowley, Summerfield, Griffiths, Denny, Morrison, Westwood, Charlton, Michel-Gueyes, Reffell, Waite (Daniels 64), Hales.

Inspired Lambert was terrific, says Albion boss Pulis

TONY PULIS hailed "terrific" Rickie Lambert after the striker inspired Albion's comeback to claim a point at West Ham.

With the Baggies one down at Upton Park, Pulis introduced the veteran striker as a half-time substitute and within five minutes he had helped create the equaliser when his shot deflected off the hand of Hammers skipper Winston Reid.

The 33-year-old has seen his playing time limited since a £3million summer move from Liverpool and Pulis believes his performance in yesterday's 1-1 draw was just reward for his professional attitude.

"It was time for Rick," said the Baggies head coach. "He is a wonderful footballer."

"Since he's joined the club, he's not played as much football as he wants and that's my fault. I pick teams I think are going to win games."

"His attitude to training and the players and the young people at the football club is absolutely fantastic. He cares about football and wants to play every."

Saddlers bag big game victory



Milan Lalkovic scores the winner at Banks's

Walsall 2 Bradford 1

THIS was a game with so much riding on it. Phil Parkinson's side arrived in spectacular form, 10 games unbeaten and having gone a staggering seven fixtures without conceding a goal.

In contrast, Walsall had taken just one point despite dominating possession and creating 36 chances in their previous outings against Swindon and Sheffield United.

Right from the off, both sides were at it. Bradford's high intensity, high pressing game plan was evident.

Centre-backs Paul Downing and James O'Con-

Football

nor, skipper Adam Chambers and even goalkeeper Neil Etheridge got in on the act as the Saddlers zipped the ball around at will.

Walsall deserved their lead when Tom Bradshaw opened the scoring with his third goal in as many games.

After the break, with Hanson leading the line, the Bantams took the game to the Saddlers.

Lee Evans spectacularly volleyed his side level just after the hour mark.

Yet Milan Lalkovic got them back in front.

MR SMITH GOES TO BRENTFORD

MANY Walsall fans believe their promotion dreams are in tatters following the shock departure of boss Dean Smith.

Smith and assistant manager Richard O'Kelly left the Banks's Stadium on Monday to join Championship side Brentford.

The news has been met with dismay by the majority of Saddlers supporters who, after an impressive start to the season, had hoped Smith would stay to mastermind their push for the Championship.

Smith and O'Kelly were in the crowd on Monday night to watch their new side in action against Bolton at the Macron Stadium.

Now the Saddlers begin life without their old management team.

Coaches John Ward, Jon Whitney and Neil Cutler will be in charge of team affairs.

And in another surprise twist, reports emerged that Salop boss Micky Mellon could be one of the names in the frame to replace Smith at the Banks's.

Favourite

Current development coach Ward is the early favourite with bookmakers but it's Wolverhampton-born Sean O'Driscoll who is the man being talked about by Walsall fans thanks to the impressive job he did guiding Doncaster into the Championship.

Mark Cooper, Chris Powell and Paul Tisdale were other names mentioned, while in another bizarre move, the official Walsall Twitter account sent a blank tweet to an unverified account apparently belonging to Ian Holloway. That tweet was swiftly deleted.

Former Villa boss Tim Sherwood and current skipper Adam Chambers are also viewed as outsiders for the managerial vacancy.

As well as their impressive form this season, Smith guided Walsall to a first-ever Wembley appearance back in March, with his side eventually losing 2-0 to Bristol City in the final of the Johnstone's Paint Trophy.

That success led to a number of admiring glances, with Championship strugglers Rotherham making an approach to speak to him back in



Ex-Walsall manager Dean Smith who has left Banks's to take charge of Brentford

October. The move was quickly rebuffed by the Saddlers board with Smith subsequently signing a new 12-month rolling contract. But a club statement confirmed yesterday that the manager's new deal included a clause that would allow Smith to speak to interested parties.

"After rebuffing interest from a Championship club last month, the Saddlers successfully agreed a new 12-month rolling contract with Dean," the statement said.

"However, at the time of signing he requested assurances from the club that he would be given the opportunity to speak to any interested parties regarding any future job opportunities should

they arise." Brentford are believed to have targeted Smith after a move for Swansea assistant manager Pep Clotet collapsed last week.

And the Walsall club statement confirmed the Bees made their approach in the build-up to Saturday's 2-1 win over Bradford.

"After an approach from Brentford ahead of our game against Bradford City on Saturday – Dean indicated his desire to speak to the Championship outfit," it read.

"Talks were concluded swiftly and he indicated his desire to leave the Banks's Stadium to take up the reins at Griffin Park."

Fans and players will miss Dean

WALSALL players and fans were united in their sadness at seeing boss Dean Smith leave the Banks's.

Winger Milan Lalkovic paid tribute to the former boss on Twitter, saying: "All the best to Dean Smith great man and great manager."

Striker Tom Bradshaw, who was signed from Shrewsbury by Smith, wrote on Instagram: "I'd like to thank Dean Smith and Richard O'Kelly for all the support they have given me in the last 18 months."

"They have been instrumental in the progression of my career, I learned a lot from them both and wish them the best!"

Former skipper Martin O'Connor tweeted: "Deano's off to the smoke! Good luck mate, you're off to the big leagues."

Saddlers fan Paul Townsend, visiting from from Adelaide, Australia, said: "I'm very disappointed I thought he would actually see out his contract, he's taken the team to the top of the league and Wembley this year so I'm very surprised that he would actually go to Brentford of all clubs."

"I know it's an awful thing to say but it's money."

"It would be the only think I could think of, because I mean Brentford are not a very fashionable club."

"I can understand him going to a high standard team in the Championship or even the Premier League, but not going to Brentford of all clubs."

Daniel Barker, aged 27, from Willenhall said: "I'm disappointed. I think it's poor timing for the club. He's spent the last four-and-a-half years getting us into the best position he could, building a team that can defend and attack at the same time has took a few years to put together on a shoestring budget."

Darlo extend run with late double

TWO goals in the final 10 minutes denied FC Stafford a first victory at Bentley Pavilion as Darlston claimed a 2-2 draw in West Midlands Division One.

The visitors opened the scoring on seven minutes when David Wilcox fired home from close range

A rare home defeat for Darlston looked likely when substitute Ben Smith netted from 18 yards on 74 minutes.

However, a Mark Swann goal on 81 minutes gave them hope and a late onslaught resulted in Mark Stanton heading home at the far post two minutes from time to extend their unbeaten league run to nine games.

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